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CASUALTIES AFLOAT.

THE LIFE BUOY

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See Page 143.

CASUALTIES AFLOAT:

WITH

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

FOR

THEIR PREVENTION AND REMEDY.

Illustrated by Original Anecdotes.

Augustus Frederick
LIEUT. A. F. KYNASTON, R.N.

A MAN OVERBOARD!!

LONDON:
TRELAWNEY SAUNDERS, 6, CHARING CROSS,
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TO REAR ADMIRAL

HYDE PARKER, C.B.

A NO LESS

DISTINGUISHED ORNAMENT OF THE RANK WHICH HE HOLDS

THAN A ZEALOUS FRIEND

TO THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED UNDER HIM

This Treatise

IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

BY

ONE OF HIS "OLD RODNEYS."

"True to the dream of Fancy, Ocean has
His darker tints, but where's the element
That chequers not its usefulness to man
With casual terror?"

CAMPBELL.

PREFACE.

To disarm our Channel of many of its terrors, and to reduce the number of shipwrecks in general, the energies of the British Government and the inventive genius of private individuals have been frequently directed; nor has the success which has crowned their efforts been altogether the result of the construction of harbours of refuge, or of an increased number of light-houses and life-boats, but of striking at the causes which have been proved by subsequent investigation to have led to disaster.

The treatise now offered to the public, although occupied with a less extensive field of inquiry, may tend to develop the same results; its purpose being

to discuss, with a view to their prevention, the ordinary casualties incidental to a ship's career, such as compromise the lives of one or more of her crew; to offer comments on the efficiency of the various methods generally used for their remedy, and to suggest others which may possibly be found to benefit the great cause of saving life. Accidents in boats, which would have engrossed too large a space, are reserved for a future effort.

And if, moreover, any remarks contained in this little volume should lead partially to remove the prejudices of those persons who are wont to darken their notions of a sea life with more dangers than are found to be its necessary accompaniments; or if any of the Plans hereto appended should ever secure the means of safety to one whose footing has failed him in the execution of his duty, the author's labour will have been amply requited.

Some few anecdotes have been introduced by way of notes at the conclusion of each chapter, with the purpose generally of supporting the suggestions contained in the text—they may serve,

moreover, to relieve the dryness of mere didactic dissertation; and although the names of ships and persons have therein been purposely omitted, the details may be sufficiently clear to recall to the author's naval friends some of the striking incidents which they, in common with himself, have witnessed, or in which they have borne a conspicuous part; and to revive pleasing reminiscences of past services afloat, and the scenes they have visited together.

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ERRATA.

Page 60 (motto), *for* "choke their act," *read* "choke their art."
85, Note 2, *for* "Lieut. S." *read* "Lieut. W."

PART I.

A MAN OVERBOARD!!

Causes and Effects.

" Obscurest night involved the sky,
Th' Atlantic billows roar'd,
When such a destined wretch as I
Wash'd headlong from on board.
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left."

COWPER. *The Cast-away.*

CASUALTIES AFLOAT.

CHAPTER I.

ORDINARY CAUSES.

" Ships are but boards, sailors but men;
And then there is the peril of waters."
Merchant of Venice, Act i. Sc. 3.

NEXT to the fearful alarm of "Fire" in a house on shore, with all its dread accompaniments,—the rattling of engines—the tread of vast masses of men through the streets of a town—the cries of the terrified inmates of the house itself, there can be no sounds more alarming than the peculiar sharp click of the firing of the life-buoy at sea; the instinctive rush up the ladders of a ship in the depth of the night—the ominous whisper of, What is it? Who is it? (for in a well-regulated man-of-war the first sounds of alarm soon subside into a whisper;) these questions appear always unanswerable; whether it be relative or friend, where or whence he has fallen none can tell; in short, there

always is, and always will be, a certain degree of bewilderment attending a casualty of the kind.

It is unnecessary to dilate on a scene which has been so often and vividly described by many able pens, and which is familiar to the experience of so many; nor, indeed, does it seem to require any very great stretch of the imagination to picture it: but, having partially introduced the subject to which the remarks in this treatise have more direct reference, I shall proceed at once to a development of the causes which commonly lead to swell the list of casualties incidental to a ship's track over the ocean, my remarks being chiefly applicable to those of the Queen's service, where these casualties must be of more frequent occurrence. The reasons for this are obvious:—

First, owing to the larger body of men which constitute the crew of a man-of-war, according to the laws of chance these casualties must be more common. It would be difficult to propose a remedy on this head; on the contrary, the chances themselves must of necessity be increased, when, for war or other emergency, it is found necessary to increase the complements themselves.

Secondly, in a newly-commissioned ship, for whose future efficiency a considerable share of *exercise aloft* is indispensible on the first start. On these occasions danger may hover over the daring recklessness and over-confidence of the practised seaman, as over the

timid and tottering footing of the newly-raised man while he is acquiring his *sea-legs*. For this there can be likewise no established remedy; it would be alike impolitic, in the case of the former, to discourage or damp that very ardour and spirit of emulation which the exercise itself serves to keep alive, and to which our navy owes its superiority over others, as it would in the case of the latter, for the sake of one or two *falls from aloft*, to discontinue that very exercise which is alone able to impart the confidence necessary to save the feet from falling, and in good time arm the practitioner with the steadiness of footing and tenacity of hold of his more experienced shipmates.

Accidents, however, on these occasions are very rare: a man who is thoroughly sober strives to accomplish no more than he is in the habit of doing every day of his life; but the man what is termed two parts drunk may find himself deficient of two-thirds likewise of his usual activity in the hour of trial and of his utmost need.(1)

Accidents through this cause are reserved for another chapter; and, even taking all things into consideration, it is a matter of wonder how small a proportion they bear to the risks incurred.

Independent of the above cause, the *exercise aloft* might certainly be attended with more accidents, were

(1) The Notes thus referred to will be found at the end of each Chapter.

it ever allowed to be overdone, which is seldom the case in our navy, however wanton may be the expenditure of human life among other nations, from a similar cause.[2] It is not our custom to overpress a young crew; and the *exercise* itself is ever on a graduated scale, both as to its duration as well as the nature of the exercise itself. In the dark, or with an imperfect light, it is never allowed to be carried on at all. Owing to these precautions, therefore, accidents may be said to be of rare occurrence.

There may be, besides the system of overworking a young crew, a way of *over-hurrying* a practised one during the performance of any evolution; practices which may both alike tend to loosen the hold of a man aloft, and end in a fall overboard, or other accident attended with results equally disastrous—a perversion of the familiar term, *smartness*. Who is there that, some day or other during his experience, has not been an eye-witness to its evil effects?

Can a manœuvre be held to be, in any navy, seaman-like, especially in time of peace, which, by its rapidity of execution, involves the wanton expenditure of human life? There is said to be enough of risk in our sailors' career: there is still more work for them in store; a species of work in which their spirit delights—a love of danger—which they are ever known to court; feats in which one man loves to surpass the other. In short, having so often proved a good cloak during the storm,

we deem it profitable to retain their services for another wet day.[3]

There may have existed, in former times, another cause which has led to falls from aloft, and which hinges on the system of *over-hurry*. It was once well known under the name of *the last man in;* a system by which a willing, though slow hand, has been often subjected to the accumulated weight of his outside neighbours on a yard, who have not scrupled to make his head and shoulders a stepping-stone, to save themselves from the punishment attached to the last man in.

For all this, in the lower parts of a ship, where a fall is not likely to be fatal, especially in "a move upwards," this system may be applied, on a ship's first start, with great advantage. Many a tough spar, and many a tough servant, has been saved to Her Majesty by *a good rush off the lower deck,* on the very first sound of the pipe.[4]

All that can be said against the system at first sight is, that its justice is questionable; that some one must needs be last, and what of that? If the advantages are manifest, why should we demur at a trifling piece of injustice, if so it can be termed? Moreover, according to custom, ancient and modern, it has been often considered expedient that one life should be sacrificed for the good of the community; so, in a minor view, some punishment may be inflicted on the *last man up*

from below, with equally salutary effects. If practised from the first, and not from the spur of the moment, the punishment may soon be discontinued, as unnecessary, where a general habit of moving up smartly has superseded the necessity of the punishment itself. Slight the penalty need only be, since a good man once caught napping will avoid a recurrence of his delinquency, even without the fear of punishment before his eyes; whereas, if the race up from below be lost by the sluggard or the indolent, the punishment inflicted cannot be said to be misplaced; and its severity may be regulated according to the general character of the delinquent himself.

Some persons may be impressed with a very natural idea, that there is more danger to the seaman in the open ocean during those convulsions of the elements which strew our coast with wrecks, than there is in the calm; others, that there is more risk to the footing of the ship-boy, "high on the giddy mast," than there is to his less ambitious shipmate carrying on his avocations about the lower parts of the ship. Experience tends to disprove the opinions of both alike, and tells a different tale. Four out of six of the falls that have occurred under my own eyes have been from the hull, or lower parts of a ship; and a still greater proportion during ordinary circumstances of wind and weather. I do not hereby mean to include the losses of ships or large communities, but, according to my purpose unfolded in the

Preface, to accidents compromising the life of one or more.

Sudden squalls in the open ocean may be attended with accidents, I admit; nevertheless, they commonly give due warning of their approach, as well during the night season as the day. A ship under high land, however, must keep a bright look out; and so must an officer who loves to establish for himself the reputation of carrying more sail on the ship during his watch than another, and with so little judgment, that the whole strength of his watch is insufficient to take the canvass off her in case of emergency; another, who neglects to shorten sail until the squall has struck him, and then starts his sheets in the very height of it, or allows a *crow's nest* of men to be perched at the mast-heads before he has lowered his top-gallant sails; or others, who, in bad weather, injudiciously apportion a number of men to work aloft, for which their strength is insufficient, or order them to duties to which their activity is unequal. Because such men (there must be few in our navy) can scarcely be expected to complete their career afloat without perhaps the loss of one man, or more, on their conscience (putting ropes and spars totally out of the question), are the elements to be blamed?

In tropical climates, more especially in those where a constant and indefatigable look-out from the mast-head is rendered necessary, the masthead-man should

be relieved at least every hour, otherwise accidents have been known to occur.[5]

And to touch upon the causes which lead to falls from the lower parts of a ship, the facts elicited from their investigation will also go to prove that the ocean life is hardly less deserving of blame, since the accidents resulting from them, nine times out of ten, may be traced to negligence, fool-hardiness, or worse causes still; delinquencies which invariably entail a vast deal of trouble and annoyance on every officer on duty, and sometimes prove fatal to the delinquent himself.

Let the man aloft be daring—be venturous as he pleases; to the duty he is well trained, and knows the full measure of his powers; but it does not end here: some men, in fact seamen in general, appear to have such thorough contempt for every thing approaching common personal prudence, that they disdain to take the ordinary precautions while engaged in other duties about the ship, equally necessary, less honourable, perhaps, but equally hazardous—such as scrubbing or dabbling about the hull of a ship. These processes invariably exact the superintendence of a host of officers of different calibres, to enforce every member of the scrubbing party to sling himself with the rope set apart for the purpose. No; Jack fancies that he can crawl up the side of a ship like a fly on the window-pane, or a cat on the wall; he is not aware of the fact, that he is not in reality endowed with the

nine lives of the latter, or with the wonderful mechanical appliances by which nature has ensured the power of adhesion to the feet of the former. Independent of the above precautions, the officer of the watch, boat's crew, life buoy, &c. are incessantly on the *qui vive* to pick up some delinquent from the waters, who, scorning the use of the rope, and eluding the vigilance of his officers, often experiences a plunge into the great ocean. Accidents from this are but too common; and were it only for the hindrance they occasion to the ship and her manœuvres, the peril or inconveniences of the bath are seldom sufficient punishment to ensure a non-repetition of the cause.(6)

Ship's boys, being allowed to play about the rigging, or, what is more likely, carrying on their pranks when they are screened by darkness from the eyes of their officers, sometimes experience a fall. So small an object has little chance of being seen or heard; and once overboard, there is little hope of his rescue, even by the smartest ship, where, night and day, the means of deliverance are kept at hand. The death of helpless little beings such as these, suddenly precipitated into the waters, must be instantaneous.(7)

Last, but not least, among the leading causes which would seem to class under the head of a delinquency already suggested (that is, cat-climbing about the hull during the day-time), there is another practice, usually during the night, which may equally be attended with

disastrous results; such as, after a *forbidden wash*, the selection, during the darkness, of the most unfrequented parts of a ship for hanging up clothes, or for practices more culpable still. The only clue to the fate of the delinquent are sometimes the clothes themselves.[8]

There is very little doubt that some of the missing cases on board a ship, either by death or desertion, are attributable to the above practice. For purposes of the latter, men will select such places which may facilitate their object of lowering themselves into the water without the splash, which could not fail to call the attention of the sentry or the officer on deck.

Putting sharks, however, out of the question, or the chances of a leaden messenger cutting short his career, let the man thus purposing to quit his ship for what he terms "a lark," or for an unlimited period, deluded, perhaps, by the apparent shortness of the distance of some coveted spot on the shore, and determined to put his swimming powers to the test,—let him, while plotting his attempt, with his eye first scan the distance as it strikes him from the deck of his ship; then from a boat; or, when bathing among the rest, let him remark how much the distance appears already increased. Many a strong swimmer, even though desertion may not have been his object, had he taken the above precaution before he committed his fortunes to the deep, might have saved himself from the fate which often follows a miscalculation of distance.

Although we do occasionally see some of these missing cases re-appear on a ship's deck, after they have long been checked on the muster-book, many, there is no doubt, have come to their deaths unseen or unheard of. Even in localities, or close harbours, such as Malta, the bodies of men are occasionally dredged up, that have been missing from their ships, although moored within a stone's-throw of the shore on each side. How is it to be presumed that they have met their end? In all probability from the causes already taken into consideration, or else feats undertaken through the inspiration of the sailor's familiar spirit; not the little cherub, by any means—the sailor's guardian angel in the fertile imagination of the immortal Dibdin—but, on the contrary, a spirit whose favourite temptation consists in irresistibly urging its devotees to every dangerous kind of familiarity with the element which, under its inspiration, they are least able to contend with, and which is the subject of the following chapter.

"Oh! thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by,
Let us call thee Devil."

NOTES TO CHAPTER I.

NOTE (1), p. 5.

Dusty Ray.—There was a strange neck-or-nothing fellow among the maintop-men of a ship to which I belonged, who, although a good seaman, was a great pickle, and seldom out of scrapes; he was, moreover, distinguished by the appellation of "Dusty Ray." Whence his title had its origin, is immaterial to the point in question. His activity aloft was, however, so great, that his spring out to the earing on the main-topsail yard with the top-gallant studding sail halyards, was once compared, by a raw Scotch assistant-surgeon, in the height of his wonder at witnessing the process of reefing topsails for the first time, to the flight of a bird.

He was, however, unfortunately given, like many other good seamen, to imbibe somewhat more than he could well carry; in short, this strange fish was given to drink like a fish, and consequently his activity sometimes failed him, his good luck never, as will be seen by the sequel. On one occasion, soon after the sails had been let fall to dry, a cry was raised aloft, "Man overboard!" There was a rush to the boats, and the usual number of gapers on the gangways; oars, masts, and gratings flew about in all directions, when, to the unfeigned astonishment of all, cries of agony and woe commenced aloft, and were traced to the bunt of the mainsail, then hanging by the gear. The latter was coaxed down inch by inch, two or three gunners following it down and feeling for their prize as they went, as for a fish in a net. In course of time out jumped the strange fish himself, in fact no less a personage than "Dusty Ray," who had till

then lay ensconced in the belly of the sail, like Jonah in that of the whale, and with a strange jumble of ideas as to the actual locality where he had so fortunately lighted.

On another occasion a man fell overboard from the lee earing at sea, and being somewhat the worse for liquor, his good genius had well-nigh forsaken him, although an excellent swimmer. He owed his safety chiefly to a mate of the ship (S——), who, first throwing a chair out of the gun-room port, immediately followed it; and succeeding in supporting him until the arrival of rescue, when our old friend "Dusty Ray" was pulled out, three parts drunk and nearly whole drowned.

> "I have a great comfort from this fellow; methinks he hath no drowning mark upon him; his complexion is perfect gallows."

Times have changed since the days of the great physiognomist of our species; the sanguinary code of the sixteenth century is no more, but certain prognostics still remain, and even in this age of refinement, the stamp of the law's dread functionary, or the "complexion of a Tyburn hue," are sometimes familiarly associated in the figurative imaginations of the facetious with man's hair's-breadth escapes from the perils of the waters. The common "drowning mark" is, however, accurately defined, and may readily be discerned by the most ordinary physiognomist afloat (to borrow from the seaman's own vocabulary) under a "taut skin and a red eye!"

Note (2), p. 6.

In the year 1840, during the motley combination of fleets in the Archipelago, many Christian readers may remember the entertainments that were periodically dished up for their amusement by the zeal of their Mahometan and most Christian allies, in display of activity which often led to as extensive a list of killed and wounded as some of our hard-fought actions in the war. Line-of-battle ships' topmasts are rough playfellows, although about the same time I remember seeing a ship, bearing the flag of a British admiral, shift one of hers in half an hour without a single casualty.

NOTE (3), p. 7.

When a ship's crew is exercised only by fits and starts, and not by a systematic course from her first commission, accidents are of no uncommon occurrence. The system also of *timing a manœuvre* for purposes of exercise, and of repeating the process until it is performed within the allotted time, is a good one to be used among a well-practised crew, whose powers, from the test of previous exercise, are known as capable of performing it within the given period. On the other hand, when the commanding officer of a ship (whose evolutions aloft, that is, for exercise, have been confined to sending up and down the top-gallant yards two or three times when badly crossed), on the spur of the moment, or possibly for making a display in the presence of other ships (we'll say, foreigners), orders his main-topmast to be shifted, and allows half an hour for the process, because he has witnessed the same feat performed by other ships, he may expect to have his numbers thinned before he has completed it, even for the first time.

Even supposing no casualty to occur entailing injury to any of his crew, the national flag is ever humbled at such seasons, when the guardian of its honour, in any ill-regulated attempt at showing off his smartness before a foreigner, experiences what is significantly termed a *break down*.

NOTE (4), p. 7.

"Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down the hill, lest it break thy neck with following it; but the great one that goes up the hill, let it draw thee after."—*King Lear*, Act ii. Sc. 4.

NOTE (5), p. 10.

The prize crew of a vessel which had been lately captured, and was cruising on the coast of Africa, were in the act of finishing their dinner in the forecastle, and commencing a warm discussion as to

which of their turns it was to relieve the mast-head-man, who had already been on his lofty perch for half an hour beyond the limited period. There was a rushing sound from aloft, and each man sprang from his seat with that instinctive rapidity with which all men on shipboard seem to be impressed when under apprehension of a falling danger. The seat on the top-gallant-yard on a sudden had become vacant, and the mast-head-man, like Banquo's ghost, and scarcely causing less alarm, dropped into the vacant place, causing the plates and drinking cups to ring with the violence of the shock; yet, not only did his messmates escape uninjured, but, what is stranger still, the mast-head-man himself was on his old perch on the third day. It may be necessary to add, that he was proved, by the prize-master himself, to have been strictly sober at the time of the accident. He had been struck by a *coup de soleil!*

NOTE (6), p. 11.

On board the same ship already mentioned as the scene of the feats of "Dusty Ray," there was a man of very small stature, and who, nevertheless, doing his duty on the forecastle, looked among his fellow-workmen like the pigmy in the giant's stronghold. Moreover, although a favourite among them (as is always a willing man), he, more or less, came under the denomination of a diverting little vagabond; a never-failing butt to his companions for launching the arrows of their wit, or poking their fun, as it is technically termed; and he was, therefore, one of those usually selected for dirty jobs, such as scrubbing or blacking anchors, &c.

One morning, as the ship was running down the Archipelago, before a fiery north-easter, at the rate of twelve or thirteen knots, a man fell from the bows, and was far astern in her wake before the life-buoy could be let go, however rapidly it was disconnected at the first alarm. The poor fellow's case seemed indeed a desperate one.

"He shouted: nor his friends had fail'd
To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevail'd,
That, pitiless perforce,

They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind."

Not, however, in the present case, like Cowper's "Castaway," was the strong swimmer left to his lonely fate. His friends were seamen, his floating home as good a specimen of a man-of-war as ever showed her number to the rock of Gibraltar. The sail was taken off, and the ship rounded to, in spite of wind and waves, her way deadened, and her boats' crews bending on their oars, in the direction of the life-buoy, then far astern in her wake. Rapid as had been the execution of the whole manœuvre, the case of the man seemed hopeless. The boats were seen to return; every glass was directed from the poop, to distinguish the form of the sufferer himself, but in vain. The life-buoy alone was seen in tow of one of the boats. All hope had vanished! They were alongside; when, to the astonishment and unfeigned delight of every soul on board, up jumped the little forecastle-man, as gay as a lark after his long swim, and fully prepared to encounter the jeers of his shipmates on the score of his mishap, which arose from venturing over the bows unslung. His powers of swimming had saved him, and elicited general applause.

"A stirring dwarf we do allowance give,
Before a sleeping giant."—*Troilus and Cressida*, Act ii. Sc. 3.

NOTE (7), p. 11.

"The waters wild
Went o'er his child,
And he was left lamenting."—CAMPBELL.

It was on the eve of a line-of-battle ship's crossing the equator, on her outward voyage, when Neptune, having announced to the British admiral his dread intentions of honouring his crew with a visit on the following day,

"A custom
More honour'd in the breach than in the observance,"

had been just launched over the bows, in his blazing pitch-barrel, and the rigging was manned with the usual number of eager gazers, when

an alarm was given which thrilled through the very depths of the ship. Here the old yeoman of the store-room, who was lighting the commanding officer through his domains, at the customary night inspection, was one of the first to catch the alarm, which imagination, with fearful accuracy, associated with the fate of his only son, a little boy too small even for a rating on the ship's books, and whom he had repeatedly cautioned against playing about the rigging. From that hour he saw him no more. The ship was put about and hove-to in an incredibly short space of time, and every eye straining to peer through the darkness, to ascertain the position of the boats as they were engaged in their melancholy search; every ear listening to catch the sound of the splash of the oars, as though they might hope to gather, by the measure of the stroke, the success or failure of their hopes.

In vain;—the bright flame of the life-buoy and the pitch barrel, which was still seen blazing on the lee-beam of the ship, alone served to mark the lonely grave of the child on the equator, and to light his spirit in its flight aloft. The sudden change from boisterous merriment to a dead silence marked the feelings of all, from the kind-hearted admiral down to the smallest boy. The darkness may have screened many a moist eye.

Note (8), p. 12.

"Send for boy, O—!" exclaimed the zealous first-lieutenant of as smart and happy a little brig as ever walked the waters (one where the system of the *last man up from below* was in full force), as the boatswain, with a triumphant smile on his countenance, deposited a bundle of half-washed and well-soaked frocks and trowsers at the feet of his superior, and pointed, exultingly, to the initials thereon displayed.

In vain, on the morning succeeding each washing night, had the latter hitherto pursued his occupation of *weeding the hull* of certain articles of clothing hung up, in defiance of all order, about the bowsprit, and without leading to the detection of the offending parties, till

the morning in question, when, by certain marks, he exultingly anticipated the culprit being identified and brought to account.

"Where's boy, O—? Corporal, hurry him up!" reiterated the first-lieutenant.

The non-commissioned officers of the fleet would have been insufficient for the task! The poor lad had been hurried away to render up his last account at a higher tribunal, some hours before. The precise time none could tell, and the only clue to his fate were the clothes themselves. He must have fallen from the bows, and the brig passed over him.

CHAPTER II.

DRUNKENNESS!

"What's a drunken man like?

"Like a drown'd man, a fool, and a madman: one draught above heat makes him a fool; the second mads him; and a third drowns him." *Twelfth Night*, Act i. Sc. 5.

No man, I believe, had he the choice of deaths, would choose that by drowning; although so many resuscitated individuals have described the sensations they experienced, when the waters have closed over their heads, as even agreeable: dreams of the kind, also, which to some persons seem to be of frequent occurrence, may leave the same impressions; but, since these nocturnal visitations seldom prove other than false assistants to those busy searchers in the book of fate, the impressions themselves are light as air.

Probably, of all other classes of men, the seaman holds in the greatest dread a death by the same element whose wrath (by virtue of his trade) he is

supposed to be courting every moment of his precarious career; but it remains to be proved whether, in reality, his life is in more jeopardy than his brethren on the dry land.

Providence keeps a watch over the lives of all, and to those who do not tempt Him, the ocean is not clothed with more terrors than the land; but how often does the experience of every day prove the partiality, the insane love of the drunkard for braving the wrath of the great element in every other shape than that of pouring it down his throat; nor is there any situation in which man is more impotent, than when drunk and struggling in the waters. Lucky for the drunkard, also, if he have enough of his reason left to select for the scene of his aquatic feats a locality whose depth is too shallow for him to drown, or where there are none of those dread monsters of the deep, who, when inclined for a gorge, ever find an easy prey in the pot-valiant and the fool-hardy.

> "What valour were it when a cur doth grin
> For one to thrust his hand between his teeth
> When he might spurn him with his foot away?"

It is not so much the man who is unable, from the effects of past excesses or habitual intemperance, to bear his own allowance of spirits with impunity, or who has even appropriated to himself the share of another, that is most liable to accident. Culprits such as these are easily singled out by the officer

of their quarters at evening inspection, and removed from harm's way; it is rather the man what is called half, or two parts drunk—who is able to stand up with a bold face while his officer is passing, and thereby escapes notice; or else it is the more ingenious kind of tippler, who has resolution enough to keep back his store of spirits in anticipation of an evening debauch, stowing it away with sufficient caution to elude the scrutiny of the ship's police during evening quarters—a search made expressly for the purpose of detecting concealed spirits. It is delinquencies such as these which usually lead to accidents, and therefore, when detected, should entail upon the culprit an increased share of the penalty attached to the "drunkard at sea;" and I have no hesitation in asserting, that in ships where the crime of "drunkenness after dark" has been thus distinguished, accidents were known to be rare.

Why a man half drunk is most liable to accident scarcely needs any comment: better had such a one put his own legs in the irons at sunset; the precaution may be the means of saving him from a worse fate—of reserving him for another sunrise. But it is difficult even to persuade a man, and still more difficult is it for him to persuade himself, that he is not sober, as long as he is able to stand. What are the consequences? His life is in perpetual jeopardy: he is called to his station aloft, where his instinct, rather than his reason, may be

said to urge him, if not an habitual skulker, or what is termed "a corpse." Even then, supposing him not to attempt any feat beyond his measure of activity or strength, his footing is far from secure. If that kind spirit desert him which so often lightens the fall of the drunkard, he may be a *corpse* indeed; his own star may have sunk below the horizon ere his watch be over. The sudden plunge of the drunkard below the water is a fearful one; even if he rise after the first dip, his own frantic struggle for life often tends to hurry him to his fate ere aid can arrive. He may be picked up alive; but the strongest swimmer, under the influence of liquor, has a poorer chance of safety than the weakest if sober.

Numerous and ingenious as are the methods in use by our best disciplinarians to check this unfortunate vice, little will ever be done until a seaman's own messmates can be brought to view in its proper light the danger of screening the drunkard, especially at sea. In every ship the attempt may be made, but it must always fail, more or less; not so much because the seaman scorns the character of an informer, but because the greater part of his mess are so often in want of a screen for their own delinquencies.

"One drunkard loves another of the name."

There are other seasons when the crime of drunkenness may be viewed with a more lenient eye; for the

reason, perhaps, that sailors when on shore (the "Jack on a cruise" system) have been celebrated in song and in prose, from time immemorial, as reeling about from grog-shop to grog-shop, and at last making their re-appearance over their ship's gangway with half their clothing disposed of, and the remainder hanging in tatters to their backs; or, in short, as it was termed at that time, in right jolly trim.

But it remains to be proved whether, in the spirit of our service, a delinquency may be looked upon with a venial eye, whose consequences ever lead to swell the list of punishments (which it is the earnest desire of every good officer rather to diminish), sometimes to extinguish that very life which no one appears to hold so cheap as the drunkard.

In days of yore it may have been the custom for many classes of a ship's community to view their steady shipmate, who returned strictly at the expiration of his leave in possession of his senses, and ready to take up the cudgels at once, as a paltry fellow, a poor soul who never rejoices. Such a stigma may have been quite sufficient to induce many of the more crack-brained sort, in order to avoid it, to wait their time to be dragged off by the myrmidons of justice, or to place themselves in the situation of being picked up by the ship's boat while making certain heroic efforts to reach the ship by their boasted powers as swimmers; then making their appearance on Her Majesty's quarter-

deck, roaring like bedlamites, having sold their stock of clothes for the purchase of the darling poison (for it is little less fatal, to judge by its occasional effects); setting all discipline at defiance, disturbing the peace of a whole ship, insulting their officers, and giving a vast deal of trouble to every executive on board.[1]

There is however no doubt, whether or not the improvement be owing to the march of intellect, that the number of these cases has materially diminished, and the moral character of the sailor been proved to be so far on the ascendant.

It may be the case, or it may not, but one thing is very certain, that much depends upon the discipline of the ship itself. In a well-ordered one, where the men are granted a reasonable share of liberty at regular intervals when the service or station permits, where no delinquency is passed over with impunity, and where drunkenness is by no means held as a palliation for insolence, contemptuous gestures or speech, rioting, quarrelling, and sometimes mutiny, these cases are of rare occurrence.

Numerous are the plans of officers on the score of liberty-men. Many will not receive the drunkard on board, but allow him to be pulled back to the shore, in order that he may be secured either by the ship's police, or the authorities of the place, who, on bringing him off sober, become entitled to a "straggling fee."

Where there is an established force of the shore police ready and willing to co-operate with the service afloat, this is a very effective method; on the other hand, where drunken men are allowed to kick their heels about in the streets with impunity, night or day, to reject the liberty-man from his ship might be to abandon him to the fate which so often follows in the train of intemperance.

No officer can, however, do wrong, who, on the liberty-man's return to his ship in a state when he is little capable of being left master of his actions, and is beyond the control of his messmates, immediately orders him in irons; and in ships where the "breakers of leave" are admitted on board after dark, the officer of the watch will remove a vast deal of responsibility from himself, who, without hesitation, orders the offender into similar confinement.

A man's messmates are by no means to be looked upon as infallible guardians. Many a man in the above state, who, on dropping off to slumber, rendered deeper by the effects of liquor, has been abandoned by his guardians as requiring no further solicitude, has started up under the influence either of what are termed "blue devils," or else a repeated attack of the primary disease, and has thrown himself overboard, either in the vain hope of reaching some treasured spot on the shore, where of late he has derived so much felicity, or else with a burning desire

of cooling his aching temples by a bath, or of ending his agonies by a plunge into eternity.

All boats moored to the swinging-booms at night should be moored from inboard at both ends, the bow from a boat-rope rove through one of the stirrups on the boom, and the stern by a sternfast from the gangway.

A man under the circumstances above mentioned may be drowned within six yards of his own ship, or sink shortly after the first plunge. By this precaution, on the occurrence of an accident at night, when there are few stragglers about the upper deck of a ship, a boat may without difficulty be hauled alongside, ready at once to contribute the most speedy and effectual means of saving life.

> "For waves are somewhat treacherous in the dark,
> And revellers may more securely sleep
> On silken couch than on the rugged deep."

NOTE TO CHAPTER II.

NOTE (1), p. 26.

No one serving afloat need go far from home to produce wholesale instances of feats practised by drunken liberty-men, and the fatal results which often attend them. I will confine myself to one or two during my own experience.

I remember a man being brought alongside in a Maltese boat, supposed to be "dead drunk," found in the streets by the police, and his ship being identified by his hat-riband. His appearance was frightful; his face of a livid hue, so as to suggest an idea of his having been poisoned. The liquor sold to our sailors in foreign parts is often fatal as the most deadly among slow poisons. The stomach-pump, on the above occasion, proved the truth of the saying —it was too late. Death had already claimed his victim; and the sot who had left the ship on his own peculiar pleasure, gorged and bloated like any swine, after wallowing in his heart's delight a few hours, was afterwards carried up the same ship's side a corpse.

I remember, the night officer's boat, in another ship, attracted by the cries of a drowning man under her very oars, succeeded in saving one of her own liberty-men, who, having had just enough reason left to recollect that his term of licensed drunkenness had expired, that his whole stock of money was expended in the usual way, and that he was a strong swimmer when sober—among which class, of course, he then ranked himself—plunged at once into the

water in the hopes of reaching his ship, and was thus narrowly saved the consequences of his heroism.

Sometimes a liberty-man directs his efforts in an opposite direction; or, after his return from liberty, strives to regain the shore the same night. Such appears to have been the purpose of another deluded victim, who had been smuggled on board in the first watch, unknown to its officer, and had been left in his hammock by those of his messmates who were then stirring. He shortly afterwards slipped out of one of the lower-deck ports, which were sloped, made a few frantic struggles, and was in the act of sinking, when one of the boats moored at the boom was dropped, and he was dragged from the waters. He was an excellent swimmer when sober.

CHAPTER III.

SUICIDE.

" If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it in a more delicate way than drowning."

Othello, Act i. Sc. 3.

SOMETIMES, one shudders to think, a fall may be the result of design. And now we arrive at the discussion of a crime which cannot be viewed with too strong animadversion when an attempt at it is frustrated, or too little sympathy after it has been actually committed. I allude to that fearful impulse which urges a man, drunk or sober, in some momentary fit of desperation, to rush unbidden into the presence of his Creator; to leap into the bosom of the element but too ready to close over the head of the drunkard and the suicide; to brave a death which he may have held in the utmost dread while reason still held her sway.

I would not include in these remarks the man whom insanity has rendered heedless of his actions: in such persons, fortunately, these symptoms of desperation usually manifest themselves before they have led to fatal results; it is, however, commonly asserted by medical men, that the variety of maladies on shipboard which are usually classed under the head of natural infirmities, such as epilepsy, giddiness, and the fearful host of forerunners of insanity in its worst branches, may be commonly traced to the sailor's habits of intemperance, the indulgence of his darling vice.

The chance of the greedy devourer of the column of accidents in a Sunday paper being disappointed, at the end of his eager search, of one single case of suicide, is about equal to that of a man-of-war, however happy may have been the lot of her crew, arriving at the end of her accustomed period of service without having been made the scene of one or more attempts of this nature; or having sailed away from some lonely spot on the ocean, where a dark fin on the surface, and the swoop of the sea-birds, alone mark the self-chosen grave of the suicide.

And it need hardly be looked upon as a matter of astonishment among our shore brethren, when they consider that, in a vast metropolis like our own, or even in the provincial towns, no one with a measure of wildness in his eye, even though it be brought about by some orgies of the preceding night, could look over

the battlements of a bridge fixedly, or for any length of time, upon the tide rolling beneath him, without becoming an object of scrutiny, if not of suspicion, to the police or passers-by; while the sea-going man, unnoticed, may indulge this morbid propensity, as it is called by some writers, from the hull or mast-head of his ship, as often as he pleases during the twenty-four hours of the day.

> "The very place puts toys of desperation,
> Without more motive, into every brain
> That looks so many fathoms to the sea,
> And hears it roar beneath."

And yet, with all due deference to the author of this sentiment, experience tells us that rarely is an attempt at suicide committed from so elevated a station; a fact which may suggest the idea that, since the height would render destruction by a fall next to certainty, many who throw themselves overboard wish to reserve for themselves a hope of being picked up alive. But of this hereafter.

Moreover, a man on shipboard might openly announce his dread intent to every mess on a lower deck, and yet the proclamation, I'll answer for it, would create no unusual measure of excitement, though it would undoubtedly elicit many a dry, pithy remark, not very flattering to the hero himself.

In fact, Jack will never bring himself to entertain

the opinion, that any other than a fool will be led to attempt his own destruction; a crime which, owing to the limited extent of his moral education, he probably looks upon with more contempt than awe: besides, ninety-nine out of a hundred, in some sullen fit, some outburst of passion, or under the influence of what are termed the heroics, are often threatening such things, while not one man in a hundred ever contrives to screw his courage up to the mark for taking the awful plunge.

It may be natural for people from the shore to ask, "What can possibly urge a sailor, of all other classes of men, to make away with himself? Can the fear of punishment render one desperate, who, by virtue of his profession, may be supposed to be inured to severe discipline and harsh treatment?" Seldom; no child is better looked after, or needs it more, than a man-of-war's man; the punishments are not inordinately severe, and never undeservedly inflicted. "Can family losses," may be again asked, "so affect one who sees but little of his relations, or has not probably a friend in the world?" Seldom or never; a well-behaved seaman is seldom or never friendless. "It cannot surely be from any pecuniary losses which prey upon his mind, that a sailor becomes weary of life?" Surely not: his wages, though they be sufficient for the gratification of his wants or his eccentricities, are seldom very large, and he usually manages to spend

them as fast as he receives them. Never, therefore, having amassed a treasure, he can have no great pecuniary losses to lament. "Can it be love, which drives so many of our shore folks to desperation?" Still less likely. Jack has the credit of being in love in every port he visits; his love cannot be said, therefore, to be deeply seated: there is as much safety in the multitude of lovers as of counsellors. On the other hand, when he is saddled with a wife, or gets fairly caught, and subsequent experience teaches him he has made a bad bargain, he still makes the best of it; when matters grow outrageous, he stops her half-pay, and bestows it upon another.

"Then what, in the name of Fortune, does urge the sailor to commit suicide?" Nothing at all. The real seaman scorns the act. If anything did, I should think a good hearty fit of drunken blue devils were most likely to provoke him to the deed. In fact, it is seldom the seaman is led to commit anything of the kind; and, what is more, he shows little pity or compassion for the man who does.

There are other trades in a ship besides sailoring. There hangs the mystery.

It is the man who has seen better days,—who, driven by misery and evil habits, and their consequences, to seek what he may look upon as an easy livelihood, in a man-of-war—to herd with a class of beings for whose habits he is by nature little qualified—to obey orders

where formerly he may have been used to command—to suffer punishment to which his indolence and evil disposition have brought him, but at which the miserable remnant of a proud spirit recoils;—this is the style of man who, it appears, is sometimes driven to the rash act, without even drunkenness to plead as his excuse.

An increased number of artificers of various sorts, or men with a certain degree of education (that certain degree said to be of a mischievous kind), more especially through the advances made by steam, in the present age, are become necessary to our naval economy; and it therefore requires some extra discrimination on the part of the volunteering officer, to penetrate through the garb of the motley group who present themselves for admission. A man-of-war is commonly said to bring all classes to their level. It is very certain, however, from what we hear and read, that no good ever came from an entry of one such as above described; and well may it be if such a one take an early opportunity of practising on his own person the injury he might be the means of inflicting upon others. His mode of exit from the ship, however rashly chosen, need create but little sympathy.

Really, when scenes of this kind succeed each other at shorter intervals than the common law of chances would seem to justify, one is led to believe that a certain vice did sometimes creep into Her Majesty's

service, and breathe its pernicious influence on more than one of her servants. I allude to a mania, that morbid mania of a certain weak-headed few, who look upon their present miserable existence and that dread Hereafter with such total indifference, that they are ready, in any moment, to destroy themselves, body and soul, for the sake of figuring in some public journal, or, at least, of creating some sympathy and notoriety by the manner of their death, in the search of which they failed during their life—a love of effect, or rather, of "ignominious notoriety," as it has been aptly styled by a late learned judge.[1]

Many a man I believe to have jumped overboard with little other intention than that of acting this part, or of creating a scene; certainly not with any idea of drowning himself. I wish the hero himself no worse a fate than to be dragged once more to the deck which he lately deserted with so much precipitation. He is bringing back with himself, likewise, the very best means of deterring others from a similar act.[2] His punishment is richly merited.

On the other hand, we see sometimes that the lover of effect bargains without his host—he is drowned. Could he only have known the style of remarks, the feeling of contempt, which his act is seldom otherwise than destined to call forth from his late shipmates, he might have preferred to await his

appointed time in humble insignificance, to the valorous attempt of winding up his career with theatrical effect.

> " E'en with such like valour, men hang and drown
> Their proper selves!"

NOTES TO CHAPTER III.

NOTE (1), p. 37.

THE late Lord Abinger, on the Act of Parliament framed for the protection of our gracious Sovereign from the hand of the fanatic and notoriety-seeker.

NOTE (2), p 37.

Sometimes, after the hands have been called for the futile endeavour of rescuing from the waters the man who has wilfully plunged into them, expressions such as these may strike upon the ear, especially at times when the person who utters them is screened from notice:—"What's the use of rousing us up for him? the precious fool jumped overboard! He shook hands with all his messmates at supper-time!"

Now, were it not for some part of the reasoning in the foregoing chapter, a stranger who heard such expressions as these alone, might be impressed with the idea that the crime of self-destruction is viewed with total indifference on shipboard; otherwise those who had been warned of the suicide's intentions might have saved him from his fate.

Expressions, however, such as these, were they followed up, might invariably be traced to men of a certain set—of which, it is to be lamented, there are ever many on a dark night, and of whom a ship might with profit disburden herself; but, generally speaking,

for example's sake, it is better that, among the messes of a lower deck, the rash act of the suicide be viewed with so much of indifference as is consistent with decorum, without a shadow of heroism to back it. So it generally is. And now, purposely drawing a curtain round those cases which have come under my own experience, and which have had a fatal termination, I will wind up the chapter with an anecdote, whereby it will be seen that the prescription of the wise judge already mentioned was not altogether original, but had been adopted by the captain of a man-of-war some ten years previously, and a similar remedy practised, with equally salutary effects, on a would-be hero.

A boy on board the C——, many years ago, with few good qualities to recommend him, when about to undergo the just punishment of some delinquency at a forecastle gun, escaped from the myrmidons of justice, ran up the fore-rigging with the activity of a monkey, and made a Curtius-like spring at the gulf beneath; but, in lieu of a plunge in the sea, was picked up from the deck with a broken leg. He was no sooner out of the hands of the surgeon than he was once more handed over to the tender mercies of the boatswain's mate, and his cure was completed at the very identical gun late the scene of his self-devoting heroism. Whether the punishment he incurred, or the opprobrious name of "Suicide Jack," which his act had earned for him, affected him most, is immaterial. As of the victim of the salutary Act mentioned in the preceding Note, we might say of him,

> "I cannot tell, good sir, for which of his virtues it was, but he was certainly whipped out of the court."
>
> *Winter's Tale*, Act iv. Sc. 2.

And he certainly never repeated his attempt, although, as far as I can recollect, he still proved constant to the "gunner's daughter."

PART II.

METHODS OF SUPPORTING LIFE IN THE WATER.

" He long survives who lives an hour
In ocean self-upheld."

COWPER. *The Cast-away.*

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY—ON NAVAL SUPERSTITIONS.

" They say, miracles are past; and we have our philosophical persons, to make modern and familiar things supernatural and causeless."

All's Well that Ends Well, Act ii. Sc. 3.

And now, having slightly touched on each of the causes which *directly* tend to accidents; before I proceed to the discussion of their usual remedies, I would fain devote a small space to the mischievous effects of certain popular superstitions, the inordinate indulgence of which may *indirectly* lead to endanger life, or to paralyse the arm at a time when its energies are most required. Such being the case, these classes of superstition hold their place in this treatise by right of a double claim. It has been the custom among writers, both sacred and profane, to compare our transitory existence to a shadow; for one reason, that no man at any moment has ever been able to span its length or its breadth; yet how often do we hear of persons, even in this enlightened century, wise in their own conceits, who, not only in opposition to the spirit of the metaphor,

but what is worse, in the face of their Creator, will presume to assign a length not only to their own vain and disquieted shadow, but to that which accompanies an army moving on its march, or what is more to the purpose, of a ship on her ocean path.

After all, what is there about the latter, however perfect she be as a model—which is still no more than the work of man's hands, *named* after his own whims—that it should arm him with the power of peering through the veil which divides us from the future?

The week has been subdivided, and each day derived its particular appellation, from the abomination—the god of wood and stone—to whose worship it was separately dedicated by our idolatrous ancestors. What are weeks, or subdivisions of weeks, to the living God, to whom a day and eternity are but one?

And yet some presumptuous few will tell us, that ships bearing *certain names* are predestined for a short while only to walk the waters;[1] that of others, the bark was stripped off the trees, or that the trees themselves were felled on a fatal day,—that those of her future crew who grow sick must die—that those who fall overboard must be drowned. Even the sailor himself, unwilling to part with the old and familiar superstition, may still attach an evil destiny to the ship, whose active chief, in defiance of the hollow tenets of a superstitious crew, and in the zealous discharge of his duties, proceeds to trip his anchor indiscriminately *on that day*

of the week when the service on which he is employed may demand it.[2]

> " God save thee, ancient mariner,
> From the fiends that plague thee thus!"

Superstition, in many of its branches, has been ever connected with ignorance. Astrology, or star-gazing insight into the book of Fate, has long since given way to the beauteous science which teaches us to lift up our wondering eyes to the starry firmament, without presumption for our incentive; whereby the sailor learns to shape his course on the ocean, and leaves his destiny to be governed by Another. Presentiments (as they are usually termed) of approaching evil we can have no faith in, since we are told by more than one of the heroes of the last war, that every uninitiated wight, on the morning of his "maiden action," invariably awakes with the presentiment that the first shot fired in anger will have his own devoted head for its object; and yet we read of two frigates[1] in the early part of the revolutionary war being engaged in close action for several hours, when the victor left the field without the loss of a man.

Surely, therefore, if there be any truth in the theory of presentiments, at all events as far as they are said to affect the uninitiated, there will be a fine field for them on the outbreak of the next war.

[1] *Crescent* and *Réunion*, 1793.

There is no doubt that presentiments of death, or impending evil, are sometimes verified; we only hear one side of the question. How often are they proved to be false; unnoticed, or untold, without they are actually accomplished! So it is with dreams; their occasional accomplishment, therefore, comes under the common law of chances. There is little doubt that they may also occasionally lead to their own fulfilment, partly in the same manner as in the case of the wise-acre who prophesied his own death at a certain hour, and, in the nervous agony of watching the hand of the clock as it approached the awful figure on the dial, committed suicide at the identical time.

However, in this enlightened age, when education is extending its influence over the ocean as over the land, it is high time that all follies such as these were fairly swept away, amid other rubbish heaped together during the darker ages. The age of miracles, and, it may be presumed also, of celestial warnings, is past, and our own consciences must tell us, that the man who waits for a warning from above, may some day be cut off, like Denmark's fated Prince,

"Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd."

Heaven protect our "hearts of oak" from the moon-light visits of a gloomy, restless spirit such as this, ever ready to pour into the ears of a set of simple-minded men, very much disposed to take the gifts of fortune as

they come into their hands,—at all events, never forming gloomy prognostications, but rather fortifying themselves and their condition against the untoward events which may cross their path,—the dregs of a poison imbibed in some unlucky moment by the dreamy sages of days bygone!

Let sailors, even of the present day, continue to enjoy their harmless tale of superstition, to wile away the tedium of a watch at sea, and create a laugh at the expense of their credulous ancestors; but let a man of superior education, to whom they are wont to look up with respect, once succeed in scattering among them the seeds of the mischievous class of superstitions above-named, the scene is changed; their own intuitive love of the marvellous rendering them more sensible of the impression, it is possible that some day or other their efforts may be paralysed, when most called for to save their ships as well as their own lives. Many ships may have been lost, many lives may have been sacrificed, to a fatal, a cruel delusion.[3]

Better had the man who is detected in the act of disseminating doctrines so opposite to the spirit of our service, prophesy to himself, at such times when his prophetic fame is at stake, the punishment due to his offence; he may thus establish his character at the expense of his skin.

And lastly, let the Fatalist indulge his gloomy notions in the solitude of his chamber, and brood over the fall

of nations and kingdoms, the destruction of ships and armies, which he has included in his presumptuous scheme; let the Mahomedan still cling to the darling tenets of his faith, and withdraw his hand from the plague-stricken and the drowning man;[4] the faith of the Christian, and the spirit of the British navy, teach us that the seaman's brightest ornament, besides the "heart which can feel," is the hand which is stretched forth to save the life of another.

And now for a discussion of those means which the latter, in direct opposition to the shallow fallacies of the Mahomedan and the Fatalist, delights to employ, in his eagerness to save the life of his fellow-being, even at the risk of his own.

The success of all schemes of man's ingenuity, it is unnecessary to state, is uncertain as are all his other speculations, hinging as they do on a Will infinitely superior to his own; but that they are frequently allowed by that same Will to be successful, the experience of every day goes far to convince us.

To calculate, therefore, the chances of success of the methods employed in our naval service for saving life, by any ordinary train of reasoning, were impossible, from that very frequent and miraculous interposition of a benign power, and as aforesaid, the inscrutable workings of the Divine Will. One man a fall of a few feet may destroy, while others may be precipitated from the giddy height with little injury to themselves; a man

may fall inboard or overboard; the ship may be at sea, or in harbour; he may be drunk, or he may be sober; he may break his neck, or be drowned.[5]

To form a general rule out of all the foregoing, would be a task for somewhat more than human philosophy; nevertheless, by experience we are enabled to draw certain inferences, not staking, of course, any chances of a man's safety on the manœuvres of the vessel herself to rescue him. These, which will be discussed in their place, we will now presume to be for the best.

Provided he swim well, and his reason be tolerably collected after his fall, or if he be perfectly sober, a man who falls overboard has a better chance at any time than one inboard; and there is probably more hope of his being picked up alive if he fall during the night at sea, than in harbour. For this reason:—when a ship is at anchor, there are seldom many loungers about the upper deck after the hands are piped down. A fall, consequently, may be either unseen or unheard, or rescue not be sufficiently prompt to avoid a catastrophe; on the other hand, at sea, during night or day, from the very opposite reasons, an accident can seldom pass unnoticed. There is also much depending on the nature of the fall —that is, on the particular position of the body when it first strikes the surface—as, of course, there is on the initial velocity imparted by the height from which it has descended. Sometimes the man known to be a good swimmer is never again seen after he has first sunk

under the waves. (See Arnott's Physics, "Fluid Support.")

As a summary of the whole: let a man be sober—let him have acquired the confidence of a good swimmer—(by the possession of which, water becomes in a measure as familiar to the seaman as the very air which he breathes — a confidence which it would seem his particular province to acquire) — who will maintain that the ocean path is actually more dangerous than the land, even before the introduction of railroads and steam engines? It may be a more slippery one, it is true, but how far greater is the number of hair-breadth escapes, than of fatal results from a fall!

Even when his footing has slipped, and he is once more on a dry deck again, the danger is soon forgotten, although the sufferer himself, as he shakes the brine off his locks, and collects his scattered senses, may congratulate himself on the law of chances being in his favour against a second edition of the danger from which he has escaped.

"He went like one that hath been stunn'd,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder, and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn."

NOTES TO CHAPTER I.

NOTE (1), p. 44.

WHEN two ships bearing the *same name* have come to an untimely end, the career of the *third*, according to the tenor of a common naval superstition, must be attended with certain and speedy destruction.

I myself have witnessed the evil tendency of this unaccountable folly, which may sometimes tend to work out its own fulfilment. An instance of the latter will be given in another note. The superstition itself, like others, may often be traced to a more barbarous age; and the imagination, without any very great flight, may associate the case in point with the following legend.

At three different periods, or between the sixth and twelfth centuries, *three* expeditions were launched on the ocean by the spirit of enterprise, which then characterized the ancient, as it now does the Briton of the present day. Through the unfortunate results attending the career of the *three*, these unfortunate expeditions have been handed down to posterity, in prose or song, as the "Three Disappearances, or the Triad," (*Maritime and Inland Discovery.*) As for the *third*, we can hardly be astonished at its sudden disappearance, considering that its gallant chief is represented as braving the ocean in a house of glass, with nine bards among his crew; and, as might have been anticipated, got no farther than the Bristol Channel.

We may premise, therefore, (to revert to the modern superstition of three,) that the fatality attached to the third ship of a name, is

built with equally brittle materials as the ship selected for the third expedition by the Welsh prince. And, without harping on the unhappy fate of the aforesaid "tuneful nine," still less of those included in the wholesale massacre of the barbarous Edward, we may indulge in another very reasonable supposition, (which will go still farther towards establishing the connecting link between the ancient legend and the modern superstition of the "Triad,") that a portion of the bard's romantic spirit has survived the general wreck; and that, in like manner as these ancient expeditions were furnished with the aforesaid essentials for singing the achievements, or, as it often proved, chanting the requiem of their adventurous leaders, so there are few ships of the present day which cannot boast equally useless supernumeraries among their establishment, ever ready to croak not only on the merits or demerits of their chiefs, the duties of their ship and station, but what is more to the point, on the subject of any fatality which their ingenuity may suggest as haunting her ocean path.

NOTE (2), p. 45.

Friday, although it be considered an unlucky day in our Christian, more especially the Roman Catholic calendar, has an actual fatality (strange to say) attached to it on our naval Log-book.

No one can deny that certain vessels may have experienced disaster, or even come to an untimely end, which have been proved to have weighed their anchor on a Friday, as on other days of the week. We seldom, however, hear how many escape scot-free, who set the laws of fatality at defiance, and make a habit of sailing with the first fair wind.

One of the most successful among our Anti-Slavery cruizers, it is said, made it a point, whenever his duty permitted, to start upon his cruize on a Friday. What he lost by his presumption is not shown; what he gained is best seen by the records at the Admiralty, and the balance-sheet at his prize-agent's. To follow up the absurdity of the superstition, I will give a characteristic sketch.

"SAILING ON A FRIDAY."

"The loud wind never reach'd the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on;
Beneath the lightning and the moon,
The dead men gave a groan.

"The helmsman steer'd, the ship moved on,
Yet never a breeze up blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
As they were used to do."

Ancient Mariner.

The merry sounds of the bell striking eight, associated with visions of ship's good cheer, served to stimulate the efforts of the marines, at the capstan of a ninety-gun ship bearing the broad pendant of a gallant commodore, and to convert the measured stamp into a good round trot. In a few minutes the anchor was at the bows, the ship and her consorts under a crowd of canvass, their dinner pendants consigned to the signal-locker, and their crews shortly afterwards discussing the hardness of good "queen's own" rather than the hardships of their destiny, and nothing savouring of gloomy prognostications. It may be necessary here to state, that the day of the week was Saturday.

A few days afterwards, the commodore's ship came to in Malta harbour, in her usual good style, although the broad pendant waved from a less dignified position, and her rig itself seemed much altered during her last cruize; in short, she bore marks of having suffered in some commotion of the elements; her mainmast was jury-rigged, and fished by her spare topmast being stepped on the main-deck, and lashed to it among smaller spars; her maintopmast pointed and lashed low down the mainmast, close to the heel of the other topmast, so that she might set a double reefed topsail on it; a stump maintopgallant mast fidded with topgallant sail set over all; and on the truck was displayed the broad pendant, still unsubdued, and floating over a piece of undeniable seamanship.

She had been struck by lightning on her passage; and although

on fire aloft, her mainmast scorched to the very heart and its hoops burst off, and her magazine reported full of smoke, the electric fluid passed out; the injuries during its progress being limited to the loss of two men, besides the damaged masts. All the knotty pieces of seamanship aloft being completed, then commenced among the messes on the lower deck the discussion of a knotty point of metaphysics, as to whether the ship could not be proved to have sailed on Friday.

One party, possessed of a little scientific lore, maintained that, since a ship progressed by the aid of astronomical observation, the astronomical day, commencing and ending at noon, was the one therefore to be taken as the standard; and therefore, that the ship having commenced getting under weigh before noon on the Saturday, actually sailed on Friday. Another would have it, that the figures on the ship's log commenced and ended at midnight, and that the log-day, and not the astronomical, (since the former was used actually for making the ship's progress,) must be taken into the view. That therefore the ship, whether she tripped her anchor a little before or a little after noon on Saturday (no matter which), did actually sail on a Saturday; and the "Friday fatality" could not bear on their late disaster. They could come to no understanding, and the matter was referred by the disputants to higher authority, when they received another light on the subject; they were told, that, even supposing the log party and the astronomical party to be both right, there being a doubt as to whether the anchor was out of the ground a few minutes before or a few minutes after noon, another calculation was required; that a ship at anchor made it noon according to the mean time of the place, but that once under weigh, the time by the sun, or apparent time, was observed; between these there was a marked difference.

The mystery of equation of time fairly floored Jack, and he retreated, impressed probably with the wholesome conviction, that, in cases where there are so many straws to split, the laws of fatality are not to be unravelled, and (as they might be supposed to bear on the late casualty) that, whether his ship sailed on a Friday or Saturday, he owed much to a merciful Providence; since, had the electric fluid done its work, a portion of the armament of a proud

ninety might have been fished up on the shores of Sicily, and like the guns blown up in the poor *Ajax*, still visible on the island of Tenedos, would have alone served to remind future generations of the untimely end of the gallant commodore and his devoted crew.

NOTE (3), p. 47.

THE "THIRD OF A NAME."

One fine winter's morning, in the latter part of the year 1830, an unusual crowd of spectators might have been observed about the heights of Plymouth, following with their eyes the course of one of His Majesty's corvettes, then leaving England for the first time. Moreover, any quick listener among the crowd on that occasion, might have caught the sound of words of mysterious and decidedly ominous tendency, savouring of prophetic denunciations, which continued until the object of their interest was shut out from their view. Then, no doubt, many a fair owner of an aching heart returned to her home, now a desert; and many of a certain stamp retired to brood over their barometers, in silent expectation of some fast-approaching outburst of the elements, which by the laws of fate were inevitably decreed shortly to pour their wrath on the devoted corvette.

In short, she was the *third of a name*, and her two predecessors had come to an untimely end; one perished by the flames, the other left her bones among the rocks of the Isle of Man. Who could, therefore, doubt the fate of the *third*, now sailing to her doom? On board the said sloop, moreover, sailed (likewise for the first time) a youth, the *third also of a name*, which had been at different periods enrolled on the books of His Majesty's ships; the *first two* of the name having met violent deaths—the one by the fire of his country's enemies, the other by drowning,—both sleep in a sailor's grave. On the following morning the sun rose fiery, the clouds which accompanied him assumed dark and fantastic shapes, the barometer was falling perceptibly. Shortly afterwards, a south-wester piped up of unusual violence, driving in, like flying-fish before the dolphin,

the host of small craft which the zephyrs of the preceding day had seduced into quitting their anchorage, for pleasure or profit; but the devoted vessel was not among their number. On the third, vestiges of wreck marked with the "fated name" were washed on the shores of Scilly. Here was food for the marvellous! Who at a time like this could call to mind the many fragments of a vessel's equipment which are daily washed upon our coast during the winter season, and of which ships often intentionally lighten themselves?

Numerous were the applications at the Admiralty for information, during that eventful month. Mothers wept the loss of the last joy of their life; the widow prepared her gloomy weeds; some actually put on the mourning garb for individuals among that ship's crew, whom blind superstition, contrary to the law of chance, had condemned to a watery grave.

Let persons beware how they indulge fallacies such as these, which are opposed to the spirit of our service, unjust to the sailor himself, and harrowing to the feelings of those anxious objects of his solicitude from whom his trade separates him. Let the latter beware how they give credence to reports of losses of ships in general, which are so often unfounded!

But, where is the *third sloop of her name?* and where the third naval officer of his name?—who, it may be presumed, may be included in the same superstitious denunciation. The former still floats on the waters, somewhat worn by time and constant service. The latter has lived to inflict the present treatise on the public. How far the above superstition worked upon the minds or energies of the crew of the sloop on that eventful night of the December gale, is best known to those who were eye-witnesses of the scene. The author, also, entertained his opinions, but he was then too young to utter, and has now no wish to publish them.

> "I find the people strangely fantasied,
> Possess'd with rumours, full of idle dreams,
> Not knowing what they fear, but full of fear."
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

NOTE (4), p. 48.

There once existed among all, and there is still extant among the more bigoted sects of Mahomedans, the strange notion, that the act of saving the drowning man from the waters, or restoring the sick man to health, is no more than one of selfishly shutting the gates of Paradise against him, which some fair *houri* of the seventh heaven is actually opening for his admission.

The person who, in an idle or sentimental mood, has amused himself by watching the myriads of ants crossing and recrossing a pathway on a sunny day, may form a very good notion of the view from the Seraskier's Tower of the Golden Horn, or harbour of Constantinople, when its surface is alone ruffled by the thousands of lilliputian boats, gliding backwards and forwards during every hour of the day.

"Glanced many a light caique along the foam."

The Turkish boatmen are skilful, indeed, in the management of their frail skiffs, although, like those of their calling in other more Christian countries, they are given to practical jokes; and love to practise upon the fears of the mistrustful sitter, who for the first time, without being timid, is as fearful of a plunge into the Bosphorus during his passage across, as was once the faithless Odalisque immured within the Seraglio walls.

A catastrophe is, however, rare: and to give an idea of the scene on these occasions, the reader may follow up the same simile, of the busy little insects suddenly interrupted in their journey by a stone, or other offensive missile, dropping into the centre of the group. The very same panic follows a capsize in the Bosphorus; the circle of terrified caiques each instant taking a wider sweep round the victims of misplaced confidence, like the rings round a fish sporting at the surface of the water.

Now, the cruelty of thus abandoning the drowning man to his fate, is not so much occasioned by the delusions of the fatalist in the present time, as by the "native resolution sicklied o'er with the pale

cast of thought"—of equally selfish tendency—that the efforts of the struggling man might possibly tend to involve his preservers in a similar fate.

NOTE (5), p. 49.

In the ninety-gun ship, one of the ladders leading from the main to the lower deck, twice during the time of her first commission, was the scene of a catastrophe with fatal termination, through a simple fall. Yet the construction of the ladder itself differed in no way from that of any other, nor were ladders in that ship allowed to be reversed, or placed as a kind of man-trap, to break the necks or legs of intruders, during the process of cleaning the lower deck; a common custom, which cannot be condemned in language too strong.

Our old friend the superstition-hunter might have been disposed to attach a fatality to the ladder in question, but experience teaches us to trace these ladder accidents to a more practical source.

How often do we see the uninitiated on shipboard, male and female, wriggling and twisting about in their indecision, as to the least dangerous way of going up and down the ladders, headways or sternforemost, when a moment's reflection might serve to prove that the question is best answered by laying hold of the man-rope, the position of the body being immaterial. Some persons, on the other hand, ever make a point of rushing down helter-skelter, as soon as the duties on deck are completed, regardless of the man-rope, as of their own safety. On the other hand, a rush in the opposite direction as beforesaid, has a salutary tendency.

It is thus seen how a fall of a few feet may be fatal. The following gives an opposite view altogether of both cause and effect:—On board another ship, a foretop man, overhauling the topgallant lifts and braces, fell out of the rigging, and continued his course headforemost until his skull was within a few feet of the deck, and his life not worth an instant's purchase; then, to the wonder of every one, the falling man gave a summerset, not unworthy of Grimaldi, and changing his centre of gravity as by a *tour de force*,

brought that part of his body in contact with the hard planks, by nature better adapted to modify a shock on the human frame. He escaped with a slight contusion on the afore-hinted part.

For fear I should be accused of indulging in the marvellous at the expense of my readers, it is necessary to add a short description of the saving clause which led to the escape of the foretopman, after falling from a height little short of a hundred feet. His feet, during his fall, had encountered the topgallant studding sail tack, and run it out to its bare end, which was fortunately fast, or had a knot in it; this catching in the block aloft, brought our hero up with a jerk, at the very nick of time, when his destruction seemed inevitable.

CHAPTER II.

NATURAL SUPPORTERS —THE MAN WHO JUMPS AFTER ANOTHER.

" Headlong he leapt—to him the swimmer's skill
Was native." BYRON.

" Doubtfully it stood,
As two spent swimmers that do cling together,
And choke their act."
Macbeth, Act i. Sc. 2.

FIRST and foremost among the methods of saving life at sea, a gift of Nature's own, imparted to man, is the spirit which prompts him to dart overboard to save the life of a fellow-creature, at the imminent risk of his own. That this spirit is no uncommon one in our navy, the number of decorations earned by so many of its members will bear honourable testimony. How many others are there who might have equal cause to boast of these honorary distinctions, were it not that

the still voice of Reason, or the hand of Experience, has checked them at some time or other during their lives, when about to take the eventful leap! the former leading them to re-consider whether the attempt to save life might not be attended with opposite results; the latter serving to remind them of the danger they may have once escaped, and suggesting the question, whether they are better prepared to re-encounter it.

Many a fine fellow, heedless of consequences, has dashed into the waves with the purpose of saving another, who, had he once experienced the frantic grasp, the almost superhuman force of the drowning man in his efforts to drag down his generous preserver, might have paused in his headlong career. Under these circumstances, the father's life is not safe from the hand of the son, the son from the father; the dread feeling of sinking is irresistibly selfish; the drowning man clutches every thing alike—iron, wood, or stone, as he is proverbially said to catch at a straw. It is well known with what tenacious grasp he will cling to his fellow-man, whether he be a sufferer by the same cause, or have risked his life to save his own;—in fact, experience alone is able to paint with its full force the real difficulties with which the most practised saver of life (for it may be almost looked upon as a professional quality) has to contend, against the struggles of a man in the water, whether he be a novice in the art of swimming, or not gifted with that

presence of mind so essential to the preservation of life.[1]

When the same spirit already introduced becomes infectious, (which is not by any means impossible,) or has imparted itself to more than one of a ship's crew, it may readily be imagined that a disaster, single in the first instance, may be exaggerated tenfold; and if the means of rescue be not speedily detached from the ship, the loss of life may not be confined to one individual.

To lessen the chances of similar occurrences, therefore, it becomes the part of a commanding officer to discourage all such ill-advised attempts; which seldom end otherwise than badly, however much, as a private individual, he may admire the spirit which prompts them. He will therefore be induced to commend and reward the successful candidate in the preservation of life, while, unwilling to damp his ardour, he may pass over in silence the failure of the unsuccessful. And let the man who is thus passed over, from that day forth use his lively endeavours to earn likewise for himself, at some future period, the same honour and satisfaction which ever attend the successful in dragging the drowning man from the waters.[2]

The number of these casualties may be said to be yearly diminishing, through the judicious efforts of officers, in first numbering the swimmers in each ship, and then taking advantage of every opportunity which

her station or duties may offer, of encouraging men of all ranks willing to acquire that most necessary knowledge for a sailor, the art of swimming, and of enforcing it on the indolent and the timid.

In tropical climates the danger from sharks may be brought forward as a plea against the crew bathing; and yet there are no stations where this necessary practice may not be carried on without the slightest risk, while the advantages are obvious—under, of course, certain restrictions, which by no means enhance the difficulty—in a man-of-war; that is, having a sail overboard for the use of novices; making all go overboard together, all come in at the same time; and while actually in the water, taking means to prevent straggling beyond the prescribed limits; and to discourage the feats of the foolhardy or the lovers of effect, ever ready to offer an oblation to their darling idol at the expense of their lives. In fact, the natural caution of the scavenger of the deep ever leads him to mistrust any large body of men in the water in the full exercise of their muscular powers, or even the single swimmer, whose self-possession and confidence in his opposite element show him to belong to the superior order of beings. On the other hand, a number of men, half in or half out of the water, dangling on to a boat, or paddling about leisurely without any apparent object,—or the imprudent man who, having been bathing among others, remains overboard against orders, after his ship-

mates have gone in,—are sometimes carried off by the treacherous enemy, who, like the wolf and vulture which hover on the skirts of a retreating army, is ever on the look out for the weary straggler, the dying, and the dead.[3]

Persons on the shore may naturally imagine that swimming, being the grand essential of those who "go down to the sea in ships," is one of the tests to which all craving admission into the naval service are subject. Although we know that this is not the case, there are probably few men, or officers, above a certain standing, without a lurking objection to plead ignorance of what appears, at all events, a very essential qualification for a sailor.

Who is there that would not wish to earn for himself the honours, the heartfelt congratulations, to indulge in the reflections, which followed the heroic efforts of the gallant Lord Exmouth, when, after having, by his own dauntless courage and powers as a swimmer, rescued the host of helpless strugglers from the wreck of the "Dutton," he may be supposed, before retiring to rest that night, to have burst into the pious ejaculation, "Thank God, I can swim?"

On the other hand, who is there, seaman or landsman, that is able to tell how soon his eyes may be destined to behold a beloved wife or child struggling or sinking in the waters, while he himself, in all the desperation of utter helplessness, will be calling in

vain for the assistance which none is at hand to render? It is true he may, in a state of frenzy, render their fate inevitable and hasten his own, by rushing headlong into the element whose dangers he has never learned to master.

But to return to the ship. Far be it from the wish of any one to discourage such a spirit in the Naval Service, or even to qualify the merits of the act by too much forethought or caution, by which

> "The native hue of resolution
> Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
> And enterprises of great pith and moment
> With this regard their currents turn away,
> And lose the name of action."

But I would strongly recommend any officer or man who has made up his mind to jump overboard after another, if he have not time to study the *pros* and *cons* of his attempt (which he probably has not), or the measure of his powers (which knowledge is alone to be gained by experience); at all events, ere he take the leap, to throw over the first buoyant materials at hand—oars, boat's mast, grating, &c. which are ever within reach; even the chair or mess-stool on which he was lately sitting; he will then be better enabled to contribute a portion of his own natural buoyancy for the support of another.[4]

> "'Tis not enough to help the feeble up,
> But to support him after!"

NOTES TO CHAPTER II.

Note (1), p. 62.

THE BRIG REEFING.

On the eve of a blowing and what sailors call a dirty night, ushered in by the usual signs portending one of those tearing breezes so well known to Brazilian cruisers, and generally accompanied by a short dangerous sea, a man-of-war brig, before mentioned, was in the act of taking in her third reef and making snug for the night. Her first-lieutenant being indisposed and in his cabin, the second was carrying on the duty, when a man fell from the topsail-yard, and, from his frantic struggles, it seemed evident that he must be drowned before he could reach the life-buoy—or the brig, which only carried a small dingy at the stern, could succeed in detaching her to his rescue.

At this critical moment another actor appeared on the stage, as though conjured up by the wand of Harlequin: he had already divested himself of his jacket, and was seen for one instant on the brig's taffrail, scarce giving ear to the earnest expostulations of his captain to check what appeared to him a leap into eternity; the next, he was engaged in a struggle fearful to behold. He had made a dash at once for his prize—a dash which I maintain none but a hand well practised in the cause can attempt with safety or profit to either party. He had fearlessly encountered the death-grapple of the drowning seaman; and then commenced the struggle already alluded to, which it seemed must have ended fatally, but for the strength and presence of mind of the gallant first-lieutenant of the brig

(F. L——), for it was the sick man himself now practising this efficacious branch of the hydropathic system. By a blow of his fist he succeeded in quieting his opponent, and grasping him with the other, supported him until the arrival of the boat, which, owing to wind and weather, her diminutive size, and her position at the stern, was attended with some considerable delay.

This was not the first or the last act of gallant devotion of Captain L——, once the author's own commanding officer, and ever since his friend.

NOTE (2), p. 62.

THE FRIGATE OFF ST. HELENA.

A visit from the senior officer of the African squadron, in the year 1843, had been expected for some time; and one morning in the month of November a lofty vessel, bearing the appearance of a frigate, was observed from the different signal-posts on that isolated rock on the Atlantic, once the prison and the tomb of the great Emperor, running in for the island before a fresh trade-wind, with studding-sails below and aloft.

As yet, owing to her position, her national colours had not been distinguished; when of a sudden—to the astonishment, not to say disappointment, of the hospitable islanders—every sail was seen to shiver, the studding-sails to drop from their lofty position, the ship's broadside to be presented to the anchorage on the one side and the trade-wind on the other, while the ensign of Britain waved majestically as it seemed a parting salutation towards the island.

Their attention was then drawn to the frigate's late wake, which was alive, as though it were with a shoal of porpoises in lively agitation at the formidable rows of teeth thus suddenly presented to their view; or a bevy of ravenous sharks contending for the first blood of their victim.

Yet, porpoises there were none; as for any of the finny monsters who may have been lurking in the vicinity, they would have been quickly scared by the splashing caused by seven or eight human beings

who were then struggling for their lives, amid a shower of buoyant missiles launched from the frigate for their support. The cause was as follows :—

A man named L——, one of the best seamen in the ship, and without his equal as a swimmer, fell from the fore-channels. His fall was first observed by a man his very opposite (one I myself knew not to be overburdened with courage, and not worth his salt), and, what is stranger still, who could not swim a stroke. The latter was overboard, and over head and ears, before he could have well known what he was about; another jumped to save him; and then followed a number of others, who had caught the infection in the order of numerical progression, and all more or less eager, shortly after the first plunge, to clutch at each other, or grasp the oars and gratings which were floating about in every direction.

To the latter all, more or less, owed their safety, as well as to the rapid manœuvre of the frigate in *bringing the wind abeam*, stopping her way, and dropping her boats *with the yards still square*, and the studding-sails lowered.

Strange to say, the first candidate for the honours of a life-preserver owed his life to the gallant L—— himself, the innocent cause and sole hero of the affair; his act met its reward in the warm praises of his captain, and (if I am not mistaken) a decoration from our own most praiseworthy "Association;" the others passed unnoticed!

Note (3), p. 64.

THE SHARK.

"Beware of yonder dog.
Look, when he fawns he bites; and when he bites,
His venom'd teeth will rankle to the death.
Have not to do with him—beware of him."

SHAKSPEARE.

Some among my readers who may have been sauntering through a market-place, or looking into a butcher's shop, some day or other during their lives, may call to mind having their fears aroused, or at

least experiencing a kind of creeping sensation, by looking downwards and catching a glimpse of a mangy-looking animal of the canine tribe—or perhaps rather a peculiar genus of his own—a pair of pink and bleary eyes looking up at him, as though to form an estimate of his resolution of character—or downwards, as desirous of becoming acquainted with the fleshiness of his legs—or else rubbing his unwholesome-looking body against them, with an idea, perhaps, that by dint of his caresses he may so far put him off his guard as to indulge his cannibal propensities with the least fear of retaliation.

Such is the butcher's mongrel—ever inclined to cruelty and mischief, and possessed of sufficient courage to grind his teeth at the sight of a group of children playing on the village-green, or within his own established haunts, and ever prepared to take a snap at the first unguarded straggler among their number.

Those acquainted with the natural habits of the shark, a monster equally treacherous, and as great a coward as the butcher's cur, may trace the analogy between them. Whether the same bloated animal, ever ready for a gorge, is to be regarded not only as the scavenger but the scourge of the waters, is immaterial; one thing is certain—that the knowledge of his redoubtable proximity has often been, and often will be, the means of inducing certain classes on shipboard to remain where they are, rather than by a plunge overboard to find their grave within the maw of their most deadly foe—the well-known *fin* is not always visible!

"The fox barks not when he would steal the lamb."

SCENE IN THE HARBOUR OF PAPEETI (TAHITI).

Until the period when the flag of the French Protectorate cast its shadow on the green island of Pomare, the clear waters of the coral-guarded harbour of Papeeti had never yet been known to have afforded a lurking-place to the cunning monster of the deep, ever prowling about the surf or barriers of the reef to follow the adventurous excursions of the amphibious islanders, but seldom trusting himself in the clear water within the smooth harbour, where he might be taken at a disadvantage.

One day a vessel laden with provisions for the garrison struck on the edge of the reef, was forced over, and sunk in the harbour. The sharks overcame their timidity, to revel in the feast; and soon after that period, and while the British and French flags were floating in the bay, the waters became one day tinged with the blood of man, and the dread foe announced his revolting presence.

The crew of a French whaler, on a sultry day, had been refreshing themselves with a plunge, shouting and carrying on their antics in the cool waters, until, wearied with their exertions, they scrambled inboard. One only remained overboard; he continued his gambols for a while longer, far outrivalling the feats of his shipmates, and in bawling was a host in himself; this served to attract the attention of the crew of a British steamer anchored in the bay.

At last the Stentor himself became wearied by his exertions, and was seen paddling about with his hands, or floating leisurely on the surface, with the intention, there is little doubt, of recruiting his strength for another attempt; but fate, or rather his own folly, had decreed otherwise. Of a sudden he disappeared, as though dragged below by an unseen foe, and shortly sprang above the surface, uttering cries even louder than before; but their tone had changed from that of boisterous mirth to one of indescribable agony.

A boat of the British steamer, the S——, (when are we behind on these occasions?) dragged the poor fellow from amid a pool of blood with the loss of a leg. He died a few hours afterwards!

Let persons of a certain stamp on shipboard draw a moral from the above anecdote. Let others, whose duty leads them occasionally into certain danger, derive confidence from the fact, that as the butcher's cur is ever ready to show his teeth where he dare not bite, in like manner the dread attached to his counterpart in the opposite element lies rather in his repulsive form, and the terrors with which imagination has clothed him, than in the formidable triple row of teeth with which Nature, in her wisdom, has thought proper to arm the Scavenger of the Deep.

Note (4) p. 65.

A SPARE ARM IN A GOOD CAUSE—THE EIGHTY-FOUR OFF CAPE MATAPAN.

The success which attended the laudable exertions of the mate of the R—— (now Lieutenant H. S——), as detailed in the note, page 15, has gone far towards proving how so simple a piece of furniture even as a common chair, may be converted on the emergency of a moment into a valuable assistant to the strong arm of the "natural life-preserver." I will now quote an instance by which it will be seen that the same simple method of artificial support has been substituted with equal success by another of my old messmates, even for the *strong arm* itself.

One of the finest among the eighty-fours of our day, lately driven by the strong "Etesian wind" (of classical recollections) which sweeps down the Bosphorus as through a funnel, and gathers forces among the islands of the Greek Archipelago during its course, had no sooner put her head to the westward than she encountered a strong gale right in her teeth, followed by an unusually heavy sea. She was in the act of reefing the mainsail when one of her crew fell overboard. His perilous situation was no sooner seen from the ward-room, than a lieutenant of the ship (B——), who had lost an arm on the same coast at the battle of Navarino, hooking the chair on which he was seated to the stump of his amputated limb, gallantly dashed into the waves after the drowning seaman, and supported him with the arm which was left to him entire, to be in this instance the honourable cause of saving life.

CHAPTER III.

ARTIFICIAL SUPPORTERS—THE NAVAL LIFE-BUOY.

"How poor an instrument may do a noble deed!"
Ant. and Cleop. Act. v. Sc. 2.

It is an indisputable fact, that the established custom in our dockyards, of supplying Her Majesty's ships with a judicious selection of the variety of instruments which human ingenuity is ever ready to suggest for purposes connected with so great a cause as that of saving life, must contribute doubly to this end; since, on the one hand, their possession must render accidents involving the loss of life less frequent on the part of those who experience a fall; and, on the other, materially tend to diminish the liabilities of a wanton sacrifice of life on the part of others, such as commented on in the preceding chapter.

Truly indeed may the inventor of the life-buoy be classed among the first and most successful of schemers in the great cause, since, by means of his simple inven-

tion, the services of many a noble fellow have been spared to their country, which might ill afford to lose them. Nevertheless, like all other of man's inventions, the life-buoy has its faults, as it has its advantages. To commence with a discussion of the latter. The life-buoy owes its reputation, first, to the facility with which it may be instantly disconnected from the vessel on the very first alarm of a man overboard, when, by its buoyancy, it is rendered capable of supporting a considerable weight at the surface, if the weight be properly applied.

I am not prepared to agree with those who are still ready to maintain that the possession of a life-buoy may render accidents more frequent, by reason that the actual knowledge of its possession renders sailors more indifferent—more careless of their footing. On the contrary, from my own experience, I have been led to judge that there exists no such mania among our seamen for acquiring any personal test of the efficiency of the life-buoy; while I believe that the knowledge of its constant readiness at its post tends to impart a certain degree of confidence to a ship's crew, which very confidence is so often known to diminish the chances of the very danger which we are anxious to avert.

Although there may be cases on record of the life-buoy, through the facility with which it is disconnected, being let go at the identical moment when a man,

struggling underneath it, has been killed, it is hardly to be viewed as a reasonable objection to the plan, since there appear so many chances against the liability of the occurrence; besides, a man nearest at hand, in the hurry to obey the order, usually the first given, "Let go the life-buoy!" will seldom wait to look over the stern for the object of his anxiety before he let it go, in the day-time; at night the precaution could avail him but little. In short, there is little doubt that the sooner it is let go, the greater chance of safety in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred; we must, therefore, hope for the best, if we view the possibility of so efficient a life-preserver taking an opposite part, in the actual destruction of life itself.[1]

There is, however, no reason why the man stationed at the life-buoy—and who is therefore supposed to have his wits about him, and ready any moment for the duty assigned him—should not first look over the stern to make sure, before he pulls the disconnecting trigger, since, although a man may fall from the fore-part of the ship, if she be going fast he is rapidly hurried into the dead water in the wake.

It is, therefore, customary in many ships—and it were well were it so in all—to have a man stationed at the life-buoy, not only during the night but also in the day-time, during operations which may lead to a fall; in fact, during every species of evolution, many a

[1] H. M. S. B——, in the Bosphorus.

catastrophe may be avoided by the practice of the same precaution. The man selected for the post is usually a marine, who, in common with the other sentries, should be occasionally visited during the watch; and, in common with other sentinels, be amenable to a full share of the punishment due to any delinquency at his post. Surely the absence of one pair of hands from the ropes can make but little difference in the time consumed by any manœuvre, whereas the presence of the sentry at the life-buoy may one day be the means of safety to the very individual on whose activity and exertions a large share of the credit of the evolution may depend.

In the act of disconnecting the life-buoy at night, there are two trigger-lines to be pulled; on this hinges an error of vital importance, and the buttons attached to them ought invariably to be marked. For instance, if the "disconnecting trigger" be pulled before the lock is fired, where is the beacon to guide the struggler to his best hope of safety? If the "former wake" of the vessel, from certain reasons to be discussed hereafter, be no longer discernible, what will act as a guide to the ship's boats during their search, at such a time when the cries "of the strong swimmer in his agony" are lost in the roaring of the winds and waves?

Again, it is possible, that if the life-buoy be too rapidly disconnected after the process of "firing," the

port-fire not having had sufficient time allowed to become thoroughly ignited, the first plunge of the life-buoy in the water must prove an effectual extinguisher.

Now, by either of these cases occurring at night, there may follow two losses; first, that of the man, and next, and far secondary in point of consideration, that of the buoy; but it is certain that both misfortunes may be avoided by a very little attention to the common precautions, the chief one of which appears to be that of having a sentinel constantly stationed at the life-buoy, ever on the *qui vive*, and well primed with the necessary duties of his post.

If we look at the peculiar construction of the life-buoy, we can have little doubt of its powers of buoyancy, although there may seem to be too much metal about its materials. There are, moreover, objections to be urged against its actual shape—namely, that it is liable to impress a man in danger of drowning with the delusion, and a very natural one too, that it is expressly modelled for him to sit upon; an idea which is eagerly clutched by the novice, or even by a fair swimmer who has never had the misfortune to fall overboard during his course of service. The chief notions of safety to such persons appear to consist in the endeavour to raise as much of their bodies out of the water as they possibly can; if, therefore, these efforts should be successful, and the struggler have established himself firmly on his desired position, (which is somewhat

unlikely in a rough sea, without half drowning himself in the effort,) he is seen eagerly embracing the staff of the buoy, to steady himself on his precarious seat; he may be embracing a most ruthless enemy, which will not rest until it has fairly broken his head, (a mode of execution for which the "fuze-plate" seems well adapted,) or forced him to abandon his position, after repeated plunges under the surface. Even supposing the water to be smooth, and some active and determined fellow to have succeeded in reaching his hard-contested position, he is seen perched with his body in an angle of 45°, in anything but an enviable position.

In the foregoing objections, far be it from my wish to underrate the utility or disparage the merits of the life-buoy, but rather let them be viewed as a caution to the inexperienced; let a man only consider that, by every additional part of his body which he succeeds in rearing above the surface, so much the more additional weight becomes attached to the buoy—to say nothing about its centre of gravity becoming thereby changed as materially, as it is unfavourably to its proposed efficiency: even an oar is capable of supporting half-a-dozen persons, provided they use it merely as an assistant to keep their heads out of the water. To effect this desirable object, they have merely to place their arms over the oar, keeping up a moderate exertion of their legs at the same time. On the other hand, supposing the simultaneous efforts of the whole

six, or else half the number, or even one, be directed to the task of raising as much of their bodies from the surface as possible, the oar itself will prove an efficient aid towards rendering a catastrophe unavoidable. Every individual experiencing that dread sensation of sinking, will abandon what he looks upon as the frail support of the oar or spar, to cling to a still frailer—the form of his next neighbour; then commences a general struggle, fearful to dilate upon, but the effects of which are readily conceived.

And now for a consideration of that part of the inventor's ingenuity, by which he has vested the work of his brain with the power of emitting a brilliant flame; this, for night purposes, is invaluable, insomuch as it serves as a beacon of safety to the struggling man, that his strength may be directed in the right channel, while it acts as an unerring guide to the boat herself during her search for a man in the water.

Were the *wake* of a vessel always visible, this latter task would not be a difficult one, provided the swimmer were above water. But this is not the case: the darkness of the night, besides the change of a ship's course by certain manœuvres, (which will be discussed in their place,) would cause the boats, on leaving the ship, to pull away somewhat wildly, were it not for the beacon of the struggler's hope, which is seen blazing away in defiance of winds and waves, and which, having been

let go on the instant of an alarm, and before her course had been changed, serves to mark the vessel's "former line of wake." The human voice is easily drowned at such seasons, when the two elements appear to be striving for the mastery by their uproar. Moreover, the lungs from which the voice might proceed may be far enough away ere the ship in a breeze have succeeded in stopping her way in order to lower her boat without undue risk to the lives of others. Possibly they may be choked with repeated gulps of salt water, and unable to utter more than a feeble cry; or, what is still more probable, the swimmer himself, schooled by experience, is acting the prudent part of sparing his lungs, for in the preservation of the forces of so valuable an assistant unimpaired he knows that his safety consists.[1]

To conclude the chapter with a few general remarks. A man who has fallen overboard, and who feels the proper confidence in his own powers of buoyancy, will do well to approach the life-buoy no nearer than with the view of keeping it as a reserve in the event of his strength failing him, as the means of recruiting it—or else through the horrors of his situation becoming aggravated by the cramp, a misfortune to which some are subject. If, on the other hand, through the effects of his fall, or his strength being inadequate, he is unable to reach the life-buoy, let him adopt the plan so generally recommended—floating, treading water (which requires little or no exertion), &c.; bearing in mind that,

in his sparing his forces of limbs and lungs, lies his best chance of being picked up alive. And what does he gain, who is able to support himself by his own natural resources, by striving, perhaps, among other companions in misfortune, for the firmer seat, the more tenacious grasp of the life-buoy, which all have been exhausting themselves to reach? Let him enjoy its welcome assistance who most needs its support, but who nevertheless will eagerly clutch the next comer, and candidate for the same place of safety. A struggle for life or death, in so small a compass, soon becomes general; and the life-buoy thus abused becomes a treacherous kind of support, a bone of contention, perhaps a rallying point to the finny monsters, who are ever on the look-out for their great enemy, man, when reduced to that state of helplessness which renders him an easy prey.[2] Moreover, if such struggle occur during the night, it will most assuredly end in extinguishing that very beacon in which safety has been shown so materially to consist.

On the other hand, by the good and confident swimmer keeping aloof, with the buoy as a reserve under his lee, its brilliant flame will then be acting the part for which it seems chiefly intended, that of pointing out the direction in which the boats are to pull: on their near approach, let the anxious struggler shout as he like —his safety is then insured.

There is another circumstance attending the use of

the life-buoy, which may not be altogether difficult to account for; namely, that ships on their return from their station seldom are able to replace into store the instruments which were originally supplied. Their loss seems no uncommon event.

Whether there be too much metal about their construction, or from causes already dwelt upon, it is immaterial to inquire; but how often, especially during the night, do the boats of a ship return from a search only successful in part! sometimes, 'tis true, without the man, and how often without the buoy, although it may have been seen burning brilliantly some few minutes before!

A ready and a lighter substitute is soon put together, and one equally efficient, since the number of fuze-plates (a main part of the life-buoy) supplied to a ship is not limited to one, and the work of the carpenter and cooper floats admirably.

Moreover, cases might be cited of the life-buoy being found missing in the morning from its post on the stern, although its guardian had been shouting "Life-buoy," or challenging its readiness, during every half-hour of the night-watch. Whether it had disengaged itself through the trigger-line becoming contracted by late rains or a damp atmosphere, or other cause, is a mystery. One thing is certain, that when these things happen, there must be blame somewhere, for the locks can by no means be said to be fitted with

hair triggers, and demand constant attention from the gunner; and it would seem a calumny to attribute the life-buoy's occasional desertion to the somnambulency of its attendant sprite, in the agony of his dream of drowning. "A great perturbation of nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the effects of watching!" Yet such cases have been known to occur! even of the sentinel himself disappearing under the waters, while the life-buoy has been detached in vain for his rescue. Such are the freaks of Fortune!!

NOTES TO CHAPTER III.

NOTE (1), p. 79.

A HERO IN TROUBLE.

A CRAVEN heart is as soon laid bare in the hour of danger, as are the proofs of a noble spirit:

> "Cowards die many times before their deaths;
> The valiant never taste of death but once."
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

I have not annexed this note to prove how indelibly the coward's mark is stamped upon a man who gives way to any inordinate exclamations of terror, when, through a stroke of ill-luck, he has missed his footing and fallen overboard, but rather to show how far the act of depriving his chest of its powers of buoyancy by the over-exertion of his lungs, will tend to increase his danger. Moreover, the following little incident, which occurred while I was writing a portion of the treatise, will serve to illustrate the efficiency of a certain species of life-buoy, on the same principle as one I have annexed to this volume. (Plan I.) See Appendix.

A wretched individual, climbing about the hull, of course unslung, for no purpose whatever, — save, perhaps, to keep out of sight, and therefore out of the chance of work,—fell overboard, and, although in the bright sunshine, and at a time when the ship had little way through the water, he was within an ace of drowning under the very stern, entirely through his own frantic struggles and

screams for assistance, although he saw that his rescue was in full progress, and that within half a minute from the time of his fall.

The most enthusiastic member of the tribe of Howling Dervishes, in the very highest pitch of the inspiration of his prophet, never vociferated so loudly; the most wily or the most timid of schoolboys, under fear of the lash, never gesticulated so strangely, as the hero of this anecdote, while suffering the inconveniences of his forced bath. "I did never know so full a voice issue from so empty a heart. But the saying is true—The empty vessel makes the greatest sound."* By gulp after gulp he swallowed the salt water, and still he persisted in his cries, until his articulation and strength had well-nigh left him. Although the life-buoy was within a few yards of him, and he was known to be able to swim, he made no effort to reach it. At this critical moment he was saved by the secretary's servant throwing into his very hands, from the stern-walk, a light kind of life-buoy, *to which a line was attached.* This he succeeded in clutching: then how changed the scene! the hero now appeared throwing himself into the most graceful attitudes, and mimicking the feats of the South Sea islanders during their aquatic evolutions, and seeming to call for the admiration of the beholders. His act was viewed differently, and effectually succeeded in exhausting any dregs of sympathy which might otherwise have been felt for his misfortune. His conduct was rather that of a man congratulating himself on having been spared for the opportunity of a heroic display, than of gratitude for his late preservation.

There is as much of decorum to admire in the bearing of a man himself lately saved from destruction, as there is in that of one who has risked his own life to save that of another.

NOTE (2), p. 80.

THE RAFT ON THE AFRICAN COAST.

WHAT surprising escapes we sometimes read of, of men being picked up at sea, floating on a spar or raft, after having thereby prolonged

* SHAKSPEARE.

their existence for an incredible period! What situation, however trying to human endurance, can be said to be without hope?

Many may have read the fearful end of the "Magpie's" crew, told by the survivors of that vessel, after she had been capsized in a white squall among the West India islands; of the crew hanging on to the boat and main-boom, and being devoured in detail by the ravenous monsters of the deep, which, to increase the horrors of the tale, or gratify the morbid mania for matter of the kind, are represented as rubbing their shovel noses, and their slimy forms, against their intended victims, in like manner as the boa constrictor prepares its prey for a more ready process of gorging.

Probably they held back from the usual feeling of mistrust shown by all animals of the brute creation (sharks more especially) towards man, even out of his own element. In the same narrative we find that the blood of the first victim led to a general massacre, two only escaping to tell the tale.

On another, and a late occasion, the "tables were turned." Many readers may remember the fate of the unfortunate "Felicidad," on the coast of Africa, a vessel captured under the Slave Treaty, which, after having subsequently been the scene of murder, was finally capsized in a squall, on her passage to Sierra Leone.

What situation could have seemed more hopeless, or bid fairer to prove a parallel case with that of the vessel just told? And yet how completely opposite were the results! and by what means? By that same spirit of confidence and courage, which is best able to buoy up man in the hour of trial—a spirit so congenial to the naval service! This served to scare away the sharks, which were swarming as usual round the gallant prize-master (Lieut. S——) and his crew, during the construction of the raft, while actually in the water and exposed to more dangers than one.

The sharks, evidently mistrusting the powers of so collected a crew, in their spirited undertaking, held back, or possibly with the hope that they must sooner or later fall an easier prey into their jaws when their powers were exhausted by famine; they therefore delayed their attack, and contented themselves with following up the raft during its adventurous progress.

Some of the finny escort calculated rightly, since those of the crew who, in violation of orders, would satiate the agonies of thirst by drinking the salt water, soon fell into their power; whereas, on the other hand, those who were eventually rescued by the "Cygnet," on the twentieth day, owed their preservation chiefly to entrapping the monsters themselves, then satiating the gnawings of hunger with the flesh of their enemy, and quenching their thirst with his blood!!

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL SUPPORTERS IN GENERAL.

" Who hastens to be rich, resembles him
Who is resolved that he will quickly swim,
And trusts to full-blown bladders! He, indeed,
With these supported, moves along with speed;
He laughs at those whom untried depths alarm,
By caution led and moved by strength of arm;
Till in midway, the way his folly chose,
His full-blown bladder bursts, and down he goes;
Or if preserved, 'tis by their friendly aid
Whom he despised as cautious and afraid."

CRABBE.

WHILE the wise men of this golden age of invention are ever sifting their genius to devise some addition to the endless variety of arrangements for increasing the buoyancy of man on his " opposite element," (witness the motley array of air-tight materials, of all shapes and sizes, in the shop-windows of our metropolis,) there are others equally wise, and who have gained their wisdom in the school of experience, who, if they be not willing to condemn what may be very useful commodities in their way, have learned to mistrust their

efficiency in a general sense, and to deprecate their indiscriminate application to the purposes for which they are professedly designed.

I would not include among the former class the great practical experimenter who made his first essay at walking on the sea in a pair of cork boots, the offspring of his own fertile imagination, and who shortly met the fate due, if not to his presumption, at least to his outrageous violation of the laws of gravity. Allowing this to be an extreme case—which I am willing to do—it is very certain, nevertheless, that the moral of the tale conveys many a wholesome lesson to many classes of what are termed "schemers," and more especially to those persons who, in their impetuous hurry to battle with the waves of the ocean, prefer to have recourse to the aid of artificial methods, rather than by time and perseverance to gain a more substantial and less equivocal knowledge through the exercise of the natural powers with which all men are gifted alike.

Most persons are probably aware of the admirable construction of the human frame as touching its buoyancy, and that even as to its material part, were its specific gravity only some few parts lighter, a fall into the sea might lead to a dislocation of some part of a man's body, but his sinking would be out of the question. From a knowledge, therefore, of this fact, we derive that confidence in the first instance necessary for committing ourselves to a new element; and

by that same confidence gradually increasing in proportion to our experience, we arrive almost unconsciously at that knowledge, armed with which we feel as much security in water as we do in our more congenial element.

When, therefore, may we be said to have occasion for artificial means for increasing our buoyancy, since we know that their use involves much inconvenience to our person, even though they should lead to no dangerous issue? The beginner, who has unreserved recourse to their aid during his ordeal, will feel little confidence in his own buoyancy when deprived of their support. Besides, who would subject himself to the inconvenience of wearing a *waterproof shirt* ready for inflation at any moment, during the time he is pursuing his sport or avocation on the deep? Who can calculate the precise hour when he may find himself struggling in the waves? And unprovided with the *ocean garment* which constitutes his strength, he will naturally experience that dread feeling of "sinking" which invariably precedes the act itself, and often leads to it. Rather let the novice take every opportunity of practising his skill in the shallows of a river or lake, whose specific gravity being so much lighter than the ocean, must increase the difficulties of his ordeal without adding to the risk; then by launching out gradually into the deeper water as he improves in the art, until he has gone through a considerable course of fresh-water

apprenticeship, swimming in the ocean will become mere child's play to him; and when, on some future day, through some unforeseen casualty, his life is thrown upon his own powers as a swimmer, he will feel that degree of lightness and buoyancy in the salt water which will serve to increase his confidence, and, by sparing thereby a measure of his forces, mainly contribute to his safety.

For naval purposes, to which these remarks are more especially directed, even the occasional use of artificial methods such as form the subject of the chapter, is barely to be recommended, so many evils do they carry in their train to counterbalance the good; their general use is totally inadmissible, and cannot sufficiently be deprecated, as I purpose to show. By artificial methods I would particularly distinguish any particular kind of apparatus which is so constructed, that it may be *attached* to the human frame in order to ensure its efficiency, from those of another character, used merely as a *reserve* by the swimmer, and acting independent of his own person. I will give an illustration of each kind.

The inhabitants of far distant lands in the present day, which are intersected by torrents, or swept by the floods, are in the habit of attaching certain buoyant materials to their persons for facilitating their intercourse with different parts of the country. That they are no wiser in their generation than their forefathers,

is shown by those gigantic memorials lately excavated from the mysterious heaps on the Mesopotamian plains by the persevering zeal of one of our own countrymen. By these we learn that the Assyrians of old made use of the former kind of artificial methods for transporting themselves and burdens across the numerous streams, or for carrying their wars across their boundary rivers into the heart of their neighbours' country.

These tablets thus brought to light do not, however, seem to justify, nor do these examples of the wisdom of the ancients on this subject, in common with our own projectors, seem to offer any very striking proofs why we, in our enlightened generation, who boast every kind of vessel for carrying our wars or our commerce over the deep, from the diminutive coracle to the huge three-decker, should likewise call to our aid the host of materials, nothing more nor less than modern editions of the inflated skins of the Assyrians.

Moreover, it is very certain that the said tablets, which are figured only on one side of the marble, likewise reveal only one side of the question. They certainly represent the warrior or the carrier struggling under his burden, in mid-channel, and buoyant as he could well wish; but the art of the sculptor has not been able to represent him safely landed on the opposite shore; we must therefore assume what may have been the fate of many a brave Assyrian, and what may be the end of some of our own generation, who will

still persist in building their hopes of safety on such shallow foundations; in short—

"He that depends upon your favours swims with fins of lead."

But now for the discussion of the other class of artificial methods.

The use of an oar, or spar, or other material lighter than the sea-water, has been already recommended to a beginner; a plan which differs from the other sort in being perfectly detached from the body while in use. Such an assistant is certainly not calculated to convey false impressions of the degree of our own buoyancy; on the contrary, it serves to impart confidence, and may be called in request as a rallying point in time of need.

The little dark-skinned natives of the islands of the far west, to whose swarthy sons one element seems as familiar as the other, like young turtles, are hardly hatched before they are seen shuffling down to the beach, and, staggering under the weight of some light plank or piece of bamboo, plunging at once into the boiling surf which throws itself on their shores, or exhausts its efforts against the barriers of their coral reefs, and commencing at once the mimicry of the wonderful feats of their adventurous parents; or else, straddling on his diminutive surf-board, like some stripling of our own country on his father's walking-stick, the young savage, in humble imitation of his sire's voyages from one green island to another, learns to strike out

boldly for the ship in the offing, where he anticipates the indulgence of a jump from her bowsprit or her foreyard. Once having acquired the art, he reserves the surf-board for extraordinary occasions.

Even the fair sex among these amphibious islanders carry the palm for the peculiar grace of all their movements, as they do in other more civilized parts of the world; although the child of nature shines most in the element where the artificial European would rather remain unseen as she clasps her life-preserver to her bosom, or clings to her attendant *life-buoy*. For the former, whether her purpose be to dart down the roaring cataract,—like Sappho to spring from the rocks into the waters beneath,—or to shoot upwards like a rocket, from her seat on some favourite rock at the bottom of a crystal stream, where, like a mermaid, she has been seen some instants before arranging her tresses,—the self-taught Naiad scorns the use of any thing artificial—

> "Their art seemed nature, such the skill to sweep
> The wave of these born playmates of the deep!"

If the foregoing fail to prove how questionable is the aid of the former class of artificial life-preservers to the incipient swimmer of either sex, the following line of reasoning will go far to show their total inaptitude to the purposes of a ship; in fact, such commodities are rarely seen afloat, especially in a man-of-war, although the veil

of mystery might be removed from many a case of *desertion*, could we connect it with the possession of a similar piece of furniture.[1]

In the event of a man falling overboard, there are few among those who are ever ready to risk their lives on occasions of this kind, who would pause in their attempt, or qualify the merits of the deed by waiting until they had sought for and inflated some kind of apparatus by which to increase their buoyancy and ensure their own safety, if not that of the sufferer. Delays are dangerous in such cases; for moments of time are an eternity to the drowning man. Again, if a vessel be in danger of wreck, while the crew are at the pumps, or straining every muscle under the encouragement of their officers to save her, I fancy I see the effect of one among their number making his appearance on the deck with a cork jacket, or some such appendage about him, or his own special life-buoy under his arm, in light swimming order, and throwing out a kind of *sauve qui peut* halo around him.

To every rank in the navy the same daily rations are issued; and with an equally impartial hand are the means of preservation distributed in the hour of danger; in fact, the highest in the ship is, or ever ought to be, the last to provide for his own safety and to leave her. Since, therefore, the whole of the crew have probably neither wished to make, nor their means afforded the purchase of, any extra methods to increase their chances

of safety, (God forbid they should!) it were better that such things should be banished indiscriminately from a ship's establishment among other articles of equally questionable value.

Some persons, however, may still imagine, that owing to the smaller number of men comprising the crew of a merchant vessel, the loss of life of which we so frequently hear might be considerably diminished by the owners or captain apportioning to each man, when he entered, some kind of buoyant apparatus for increasing his chance of returning home alive.

Nothing, indeed, would be more easy; they are to be purchased any where, and at no great expense; but it is very doubtful whether so wise and merciful a dispensation, if generally practised, would not lead to a general smash among the underwriters, or else the offer of a reward to Lloyd's surveyor who should succeed in the detection of so dangerous a saving clause to his employers' side of the insurance policy, during his accustomed inspection.

For illustration sake only, admitting it to be an extreme case, transport ourselves to the deck of some proud vessel from one of our own ports, in danger of destruction, or apparently condemned, not by the hand of Fate, but, as is often the case, by her own panic-stricken crew, who may be seen, some like expectants on a steam-boat pier at the sound of a bell, rushing about in wild confusion, each man with his life-

preserver, or wrenching one from the hand of another, as though it were a bag of the precious metal in the hand of the Californian gold-hunter; others committing themselves, with their air-tight treasures, to the tender mercies of the deep; while the gallant skipper may possibly be seen leading the way over the gangway in the attitude of Nelson boarding the *San Josef*.

On the other hand, to change the scene, imagine we see some fine fellow clinging to the last remnant of his ship, of which he was once proud in the command, and eagerly watching the progress of the boat or raft which is carrying off to the shore the last of his crew, but which he had refused to overburden with the addition of his own weight. The last planks rend asunder: and which of his crew who had witnessed his act of self-devotion, or observed his danger, would not indulge the hope that he had reserved for himself some additional means of ensuring his safety, but which, until then, he had purposely concealed from general notice? Nevertheless, there is very little doubt that there are few officers who, placed in such a situation, and with powers and confidence sufficient to buoy them up to a place of safety, and the choice of artificial methods still farther to increase their chance, would not prefer striking out for the shore in the same primitive garb in which they were brought into the world.

There are certainly cases in which a partial distribution of life-preservers may be most efficient in the hour of need. In ships where there is a habit of telling off a "life-boat's crew" every night (an excellent system it is), during those evolutions at sea which may lead to an accident, or for purposes of general safety; such as, when it is found necessary to abandon a vessel, while carrying out a line to the shore for a hawser for landing the crew—a work to which so many lives have been sacrificed—a life-apparatus may be apportioned to each man selected for the task with manifest advantage. When not in use, let such apparatus be kept under lock and key; or, when likely to be wanted, under charge of an officer or sentry—a charge equally important, and attaching as much responsibility to its safe keeping, as the key of the spirit-room or magazine of a ship, considering

> "How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
> Makes deeds ill done!"

NOTE TO CHAPTER IV.

Note 1, p. 54.

THE DEVIL-FISH—A SKETCH IN THE SANDWICH ISLANDS.

A case of this kind actually occurred within a few hundred yards of the spot where the ship in which I belonged was anchored, which, from its singularity of detail, is well worthy of a place among these notes.

The tide was still leaving a harbour in the Sandwich Islands, and laying bare the coral reef which protected it, leaving also exposed to the attack of the numerous native collectors of specimens the wondrous work of its diminutive architects. For this purpose a number of canoes, with their outriggers and their dark occupants, had paddled away for the reef one morning before daylight, and the work of destruction had already commenced, when the specimen collectors were startled by a strange form, and in still stranger garb, starting up from under their very feet. It bore undoubtedly the semblance of a man (a nice specimen, moreover), in a state of comparative nudity; but what more astonished the simple natives was, that he wore a piece of furniture on his neck which they had never seen attached to any other kind of animal than their own favourite quadruped—in short, nothing more or less than a horse-collar: and so it proved on closer inspection—that is, in shape—but it was gifted with higher powers, and possessed the qualities, it appears, of what is commonly termed a life-preserver.

The hero thus brought to light turned out to be a seaman, one of a mutinous crew belonging to an American ship, whose anchor had

been weighed on the previous day by a party of hands from an American frigate (her own crew refusing to work). While his ship was still in the offing, and at some distance from the island, he had summoned his good genius to his aid in the shape of the aforesaid horse-collar, by the aid of which the deserter, after a swim of several hours' duration, finally took up his quarters on the reef in an exhausted state, and soon fell off into a sound slumber with the host of Nature's little architects for his bedfellows, for the tide was then comparatively high to what it was when the natives found him, and the coral-worm had not yet abandoned his laborious occupation. He met the deserter's punishment, according to the laws common to most parts of civilized Polynesia.

"While you live, draw your neck out of the collar."
SHAKSPEARE.

CHAPTER V.

NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL COMBINED—DETACHING A BOAT.

" The sea being smooth,
How many shallow bauble boats dare sail
Upon her patient breast, making their way
With those of nobler bulk!
But let the ruffian Boreas once enrage
The gentle Thetis . . . . .
where 's then the saucy boat,
Whose weak untimbered sides but even now
Co-rivalled greatness? Either to harbour fled,
Or made a toast for Neptune."

Troilus and Cressida, Act i. Sc. 3.

" A victory is twice itself when the achiever
Brings home full numbers."

Much Ado about Nothing, Act i. Sc. 1.

It is evident, from the tenor of the preceding chapters, that a man's chief hopes of safety while struggling in the waters, must lie in the short space of time in which a boat can be detached for his rescue, and that the life-buoy, or other variety of buoyant materials, which have been thrown overboard for his sustenance, like the advanced guard of an army, serve to keep man's great

enemy in check until the arrival of the main body and support for his effectual discomfiture.

The delay to which the boats are often subjected may arise from a variety of causes — the state of the weather, the rapidity with which the first alarm has been promulgated, the manœuvres of the vessel, and lastly, the collectedness of her crew. Energy and good will are seldom found wanting on these occasions.

Men-of-war, in the present day, of all sizes, are distinguished by the possession of quarter-boats, which, by their position at the davits outside the vessel, afford ready means of contributing speedy relief to the man who, losing his footing, is precipitated into the water and put in peril of his life. There may be some officers of experience in our navy who still maintain that the operation of hoisting out one of the boom-boats is even a quicker, or, at all events, a far safer operation for the rescue of a man overboard than lowering the quarter-boats; but the opinion seems to be too closely allied to theory to bear well upon practice: and if there be any who look upon the addition of quarter-boats to the smaller class of vessels as an incumbrance, and, had they the power of doing so, would dispense with their services altogether by leaving them in store, possibly one or more among their number may live to hear the death-cry of some poor fellow, victim to their unfortunate prejudice, ringing in their ears; or, if ever in a sinking

ship, and without the means of carrying off one-third of their crew, may they be spared to recant their error!

Now, with reference to ship's quarter-boats, were they to be constructed upon one given model, that is, the one best calculated for the particular service now in discussion, of course, much advantage would arise; but it cannot be thus ordered. There are other equally necessary duties for a man-of-war's boats which must be weighed in the scale; and hence arises the general objection to the introduction of some one among the variety of what are termed "life-boats," or a kind of boat adapted for one purpose only, into our naval economy.(1)*

There are few vessels in our service which are able to afford space for any increase in the number of boats supplied for their use; in fact, as it is, in case of foundering, or instances of fire at sea, which are certainly rare in a man-of-war, and where it is found necessary to abandon a vessel, the larger part of the crew must have recourse to rafts;—ships, therefore, are alone supplied with those boats whose construction fits them for the general purposes of a man-of-war, combining the qualities of stowage, stability, and strength: pulling and sailing, of course, as far as a sacrifice of the former essentials is not entailed. Line-of-battle ships and frigates usually carry their cutters at the davits; smaller vessels and cruisers prefer a cutter on one side

* See Appendix, (Plan II.)

and a fast-pulling galley or whaleboat on the other, which may be the more easily lowered, and disconnected with less delay, and without altogether stopping the vessel's way through the water, which is never very great when it is found necessary to have recourse to her boats for the chase of an enemy.

Of late years, also, our men-of-war have been supplied with cutters, which are endowed more or less with the qualities of life-boats, that is, fitted along their whole length with copper cylinders, cased in wood, and air-tight. These cutters, nevertheless, are scarcely worthy of consideration as life-boats, for many reasons, although the copper cylinders, were they capable of being applied *externally*, might yield fruits as congenial to the great cause of saving life as the best boat of the kind among those which serve to diminish the loss of life on our native coast.

'Tis true that these boats, fitted as they now are, supposing the cylinders to be perfectly air-tight, can never sink below a certain mark: there is no doubt, moreover, that their efficiency is first tested before they are cased in—seldom again to be brought to light during a ship's commission. Corrosion and the effects of bad soldering, therefore, work their way unseen, and this class of life-boat in the hour of need may prove a treacherous support to its confiding crew. Even supposing the cylinders to remain sound, they are still open to objection, insomuch as they occupy a large

space in the boat, which can ill be spared, and tend to deaden her under the oars, without either increasing her stability, or even her buoyancy, until she be actually swamped and the crew are hanging on to her in every direction, either leisurely anticipating the arrival of another boat to their rescue, or engaging in futile endeavours to bale her out, and proceed once more on their allotted duty.

Not being independent, therefore, in their own resources, these boats can hardly be viewed under the head of life-boats: one point, however, gained is, as I said before, that they cannot sink below a certain mark —a casualty to which the wooden as well as the iron-built vessel may be subject.

The dangers or risk attending the lowering of a boat at sea are obvious to every one; nevertheless, where certain precautions are attended to, accidents are of rare occurrence, however much the chances may be increased by the opposing forces of wind and weather. To avoid casualties, the falls must be lowered simultaneously and the tackles unhooked together; the boats must not be over-crowded by a motley crew, or the duty impeded and the dangers increased, as they often may be, by the confusion of hands or voices.

Any indiscriminate rush to the quarter-boats, if not checked at the time, or, what is better, by the working of a good system, must have an evil ten-

dency; and the success of the manœuvre, the sea-worthiness of the boats, be counterbalanced by the ill-regulated efforts of a motley crew, who are either too much flurried to be of use, or else are unacquainted with the boat duties to which, with a praiseworthy intention, they have devoted themselves on the spur of the moment. Thus every one, each man his own way, commences his task—some clearing away the boats from the davits, and others lowering the falls, before the ship has lost her way;—and thus accidents will occur.

The great advantages of a system which allots to a limited number the task of lowering the quarter-boats, and apportions a regular crew for their management, mustered during each watch, and kept near their post, must be obvious. The more limited the number, the better for all purposes. 'Tis true that the difficulties are obviated in a great measure by the personal superintendence of the officers; but in the dark, and the usual bustle of these scenes, much must be left to the men themselves, who, under certain restrictions of system, are fully competent to the task.

The danger attending the chance of one tackle being disengaged before the other, is obviated by a boat-rope being kept constantly fast to the quarter-boats, a strain kept on it during the operation of lowering, and never cast off until the boat be disconnected and fairly under oars. These observations of course apply to a ship

with head-way at the time. If she have an opposite motion, the risk becomes indeed increased, and the boat-rope from forward will tend still further to multiply it; in fact, a boat should never be lowered with stern-way, and precautions be taken in the manœuvre of heaving the vessel to, to exclude the possibility of her acquiring it.

Last, but not least, in this important part of the treatise, insignificant as it may appear to be at first sight, comes a discussion of the methods of "unhooking" the tackles, and even of the hooks themselves, with which the blocks of the tackles are furnished.

To facilitate the process of "unhooking," the self-gravitating hook has been introduced, which, by its construction, is supposed to detach itself from the ring-bolt by the force of its own gravity as soon as that part of the boat touches the water. Still there are objections to their use, however ingenious the contrivance; and whether it be from neglect that the bolts and joints become corroded, or whether the objection be the effect of prejudice, is immaterial; but I have remarked that sailors invariably prefer the use of their fingers; and nimble they must be on these occasions to supersede all risk to themselves or others.

Sometimes during the process of "hoisting" up boats, accidents will occur from the bolts drawing, or through these self-acting hooks proving too lively, or

giving way altogether, or else through certain glaring omissions on the part of the boat's crew, in neglecting to secure the upper part with the piece of line which is fitted to it for the very purpose.

There is, I should think, no spectacle which attaches more discredit to a man-of-war, even though it may not always lead to the destruction of life, than that of one of her boats hanging to its davit by a single tackle, half swamped, while a portion of her crew are splashing about in the water. This untoward event may be brought about by a variety of causes—seldom from the tackles themselves being unserviceable: in that case, others besides the crew would be deserving of blame.

Sometimes, 'tis true, but rarely where any judgment is used, larger and heavier boats are hoisted up to the davits, and suspended by tackles which were never intended for their support: besides this miscalculation of their powers, an increased weight may be entailed on a boat's supporters by a gross dereliction of duty on the part of her crew.

How often is the question asked by the officer of the watch, when a boat, having come alongside after dark, has been ordered to be *hooked-on* with all despatch, "Have you any water in the boat? Are your breakers empty?" "All clear, sir!" "Haul taut! away with her!"——And away she may go, true enough, provided there be hands enough at the *falls* to hoist

so much additional weight, and the tackles be sufficiently strong to bear it; when immediately on her arrival at the davits, to his astonishment and dismay, the officer hears sounds like the outpouring of a water-spout, and he arrives at the knowledge that, however contrary to his orders, the chances of an accident, or perhaps a catastrophe involving the lives of more than one, have been wantonly incurred during his watch. In fact, it is a lazy habit men will acquire, especially when screened by the darkness from the eyes of an officer, and anxious to get away to their hammocks. They find it far easier to let the water run out after the boat is up, than the more laborious occupation of baling her out while she is in the water.[2]

Even the remembrance of accidents which have brought death among the community, often through the wilful neglect of the most common-place precautions, seems scarcely sufficient warning to decrease the liabilities to their recurrence; and for this reason, officers, when they are enabled to make use of their own eyes, seldom place implicit confidence in those of their subordinates.

The use of iron hooks, even those of the most primitive sort, is open to objection: the strength of iron itself is not infallible, however indispensable to so many purposes on shipboard, where expedition and durability are concerned. The material itself may fail, or the work of the blacksmith shrink from the test.

Where hooks are attached to the larger kind of blocks, their estimated strength is, or ought to be, many times greater than that of the rope strap to which they are fastened. Even then, owing to a flaw in the welding of the iron, the rope may be the more durable, defects in the metal being often scarcely perceptible, whereas a chafed or unserviceable piece of rope can hardly escape notice; the former, therefore, is not replaced until it may have already worked mischief; and for this reason, the larger kind of blocks used for a ship's mechanical purposes, such as for shears, or for setting up rigging, are invariably fitted with warped straps and toggles, or lashed.

In weighing or purchasing anchors, for the sake of convenience, an iron hook is used to the block next the anchor; the metal is, however, well proved, and its strength equal to the support of a far greater weight. All the other blocks acting as "leading blocks" for the same purpose should be invariably lashed or toggled. Once, through a neglect of this precaution, the deck of one of our line-of-battle ships, weighing her anchor for the third time subsequent to her first outfit, became strewed with nearly an equal number of killed and wounded to that of another of the same name who shared in the honours of one of our most glorious actions.* This all goes to prove that where any

* H. M. S. *R*——, on the 1st of June.

heavy strain, or what is technically termed a "surging," jerking movement, is entailed, on the raising or transporting weights by the aid of mechanical powers, there should be as little of iron about the combination as possible.

This also will apply to the hoisting in and out of heavy boats, more especially in a sea-way; however the chain slings, hooks, and ringbolts used on these occasions are supposed to be equal to all contingencies, and, like our cables and anchors, are well tested before they are supplied;—not always: the breaking of more than one of these hooks (those of the self-acting kind) and precipitating the crew into the water, during the process of hoisting up the stern-boat, in a ship I belonged to, led to a minute examination of those attached to the quarter-boats, and all being found defective, were replaced by those of the common sort, fortunately before they had led to mischief.*

And now, to make a pardonable digression from the subject in hand, how often are men on shipboard, if not drowned, at all events frequently subject to injury, or put in bodily fear of their lives, by the fall of the broken remnants of hooks and thimbles, &c. from some part of the rigging! How often do we see a whole string of men laid low, as by an electric shock, through the inefficiency of a small tackle, whose powers have

* H. M. S. *C*——, in the Pacific.

been miscalculated, and applied to a large rope, with an equally disproportionate regard to the weight at one end and the power at the other? Or, to use plainer or more technical language, who is there, possessed of the powers of recollection or of observation, that has not witnessed certain casualties, and some few hair-breadth escapes on shipboard, from the inseparable attachment of the man-of-war's man to that most useful, and often most abused, of all mechanical assistants, commonly styled "handy Billy," the sailor's good, though often his evil genius, which serves either to give increase of power to a weak crew, or else to cover the delinquency of the idle and the skulking portion of a watch at sea? How often is the ire of the officer roused, and his life put in jeopardy during his watch, by the iron shower from aloft, occasioned by the zeal of some restless captain of a top who can never let well alone, or by some misplaced confidence in the aforesaid "good genius."

"Put your trust in Providence," will ever be the sailor's favourite motto!

> "For he said how a sparrow can't founder, d' ye see,
> Without orders that come down below,
> And many fine things that proved clearly to me
> That Providence takes us in tow!"

It is undeniable, although the author of the sentiment may never have been at sea during his life, that there is an especial Providence about the path, about the

bed, of the sailor. It does not however follow, that to conform to the spirit of the above, he also, like the Turk and the fatalist, should leave the tow-rope of his destiny altogether in the hands of Providence, while he stands with his arms a-kimbo and lets the wind blow him along; still less can it be the intention of a Supreme Being that his name should ever be used as a cloak for the idle and negligent.

And lastly, to return to the subject of boats, as the means of saving life. There is no doubt that the class of boats supplied to men-of-war has improved considerably during the last few years, although it has not been found possible to increase their number, in order that the whole crew may have resort to them in the hour of need.

There is still much more to be done in the way of their improvement. In the absence of the launch, there is no boat capable of carrying out a bower-anchor—on which the safety of a ship so often depends —without one of the smaller boats' powers of buoyancy being increased by casks or other temporary means, which are all more or less clumsy, and moreover a work of time.

The method recommended in another page as applicable to the quarter-boats—which are destined so often at sea to take part in the great cause of life and death, and whose inefficiency, by build or mismanagement, may compromise the safety of the whole crew, without

assisting the cause in view—may be applied with equal effect, and with trifling labour and expense, to all the boats of a ship.

If their buoyancy can be increased, as also their stability, without their powers of stowage being diminished, by an apparatus which may be applied in any moment by the crew, a great point indeed is gained;—many a son may be spared to support his aged parent, many a wife be saved from the gloomy weeds of a widow.*

* See Appendix, (Plan III.)

NOTES TO CHAPTER V.

Note (1), p. 102.

AN ORIGINAL LIFE-BOAT.

"Away we go, my Boat and I—
Frail man ne'er sat in such another;
Whether among the winds we strive,
Or deep into the clouds we dive,
Each is contented with the other."

WORDSWORTH.

Had the inventor of the life-buoy, as though he were a second Prometheus, been enabled to impart the breath of life or the means of locomotion to the skilful work of his hands, the various plans for a naval life-boat, constantly being brought before the Admiralty, would never have been considered for a moment; in fact, their presumed importance would have been effectually overruled.

I am not prepared to advocate the absolute necessity for boats of the kind, for the reason contained in this chapter—that the boats now in use may be rendered equally efficient by the adoption of artificial supporters when required.

Still less am I inclined to condemn them on any general principle; but on one point I am decided—that man's ingenuity were more profitably directed to the means of disconnecting the boats now in use without risk, while the ship holds her way,—or in fact, with scarce less expedition than the life-buoy itself. The chances of

success or failure hinge more upon the latter process than upon the sea-worthiness or ill-condition of the ship's boats.

The advantages which might result from so timely an interposition of natural and artificial support, I will illustrate with an anecdote, which, after a lapse of eighteen years, is still fresh on my memory.

"About the middle of 1831, one of H. M. sloops was running across the Bahama Bank, with a breeze fresh and fair, and studding-sails set, and had just shown the supper-pendant to her consort, (one of those symmetrical schooners of Bermuda build,) when a boy was seen to fall from the truck of the latter, where he had been employed in clearing the pendant.

Then was heard on board the sloop the "startling cry," with a full share of its accompaniments—all attention for a while being confined to the sloop's manœuvres. In due course, the latter was hove to, the boats lowered, and pulling with a will in the direction where the boy was supposed to have fallen. And then all eyes were turned to the consort with unfeigned astonishment; and many were the remarks passed on the apparent *sang froid* exhibited by the crew of the little schooner, who were then leisurely hauling down her studding-sail, and backing her foretopsail; to all appearance nothing seemed farther from their consideration, than the act of clearing away a boat.

While expectation was on tiptoe, of a sudden there appeared in the schooner's far wake a diminutive object,

"In shape a very crescent moon,"

bobbing on the crest of a wave, and containing two sitters, which, but for the substantial proportions of the latter, might have been mistaken for some truant skiff from "Fairy Lake." They were both paddling with their hands, and fast approaching the little vessel. The secret was out—it was the boy and his generous preserver! For originality of design, and its off-hand style of execution, to say nothing about its gallantry, the act of preservation has scarcely been rivalled. It is given in a few words.

The officer of the watch in the schooner, (D——, a mate whose

skill in the opposite element was then a bye-word in the West Indies, and has since earned for him more than one distinction,) was walking the deck at the time of the accident. Without other thought save one, he seized his cockleshell of a canoe, lying on the gangway—with his own hands threw it overboard—instantly followed it, righted it, and scrambled in with the activity of a Krooman with a cry of "shark!" ringing in his ears (no easy process either);—was up to the boy in the twinkling of an eye, and had dragged him from his precarious situation, to place him in one which might be looked upon by the uninitiated as one equally precarious—to wit, a seat in his own cockleshell; and was already on his return to the schooner before his astonished commander had been made acquainted with the precipitate desertion of his officer of the watch, who was now proceeding to heave his vessel to, in order to welcome back the successful mate and his prize, in his original life-boat.

NOTE (2), p. 108.

THE TORNADO—A NIGHT IN SIERRA LEONE.

"Increasing still the terrors of the storms,
His jaws horrific, armed with three-fold fate,
Here dwells the direful shark."

THOMSON'S *Seasons*.

THE fearful accumulation of disasters consequent on the fall of *one man overboard*, experienced by H.M.S. *M*——, on her passage home from India, (through which a distinguished admiral and his family wept, and the service lost, a gallant son, among many others swallowed up by the ocean at the same time,) might serve to illustrate not only this, but many other chapters of the author's treatise. His pen, however, revolts at the revival of those fearful tales, those wholesale disasters, however eagerly they were once licked up by the public press, through that mania of the age for tales of aggravated horrors: the memory more fondly clings to those where man's efforts, however complicated the disaster, and from similar

causes, have been successful in saving life, through the interposition of Divine Providence—and such is the purport of the following anecdote:—

In the early part of the year 1834, at the season when heavy squalls and drenching showers were ushering the dread approach of the rainy season, and those violent convulsions of the elements so well known to African cruisers, two vessels were lying among others off the picturesque settlement of Sierra Leone. Their peculiar construction served to mark the infamous trade for which they were originally intended, and both were ready for sea, but their present destination was totally opposite, as were the flags flying at the peak. The larger vessel of the two, a barque still under the Brazilian flag, and groaning under the weight of a human cargo, through some flaw in the act of her capture was about for the third time to cross the Atlantic with her living burden—shame to the cause of freedom!—after having rode at anchor in a British port, and that the port of African liberty!

> "Freighted with curses was the bark that bore
> The spoilers of the West to Guinea's shore;
> Heavy with groans of anguish blew the gales
> That swell'd that fatal bark's returning sails;
> Old ocean shrunk, as o'er its surface flew
> The human cargo, and the demon crew."

The smaller vessel of the two, a brig under English colours, had changed her name and occupation for a more honourable calling, and was destined to be navigated by the same prize officers and crew whose labours in the barque had been attended with such unsucessful results; she was about to sail for a port in our own country, where her lawful cargo was consigned. The time of the present anecdote was the eve of her sailing. The commander, (bearing a name and reputation well feared among the slave-jobbing princes of Africa's degenerate race, and well known at the Court of our own Most Gracious Sovereign,) had just come on board about nine o'clock, and ordered his boat to be "hooked on." The process of hoisting was in full progress, and seemed attended with unusual labour, when one of

the stern davits itself gave way, and that end of the boat, with two men, was precipitated in the water. The disaster would have been soon remedied, had not one of the leading men of the crew slid down the tackles, and, desirous of saving some of the materials which were floating away, and totally unmindful of the current which was racing past the brig, committed his fortunes to the deep.

As might have been expected, he was swept far astern in an instant, and lost sight of in the darkness; and, considering the vessel was anchored in the Fairway, the nearest land far off, the current setting strong, and the harbour infested with sharks, although known to be a good swimmer, the man's loss seemed inevitable even to the most sanguine. Nevertheless, the long boat was hoisted, or rather flew out, manned by the crew; and the commander soon gave the order to shove off, leaving his second in command, with one other hand, to take charge of the vessel—a charge which in no way seemed attended with risk under existing circumstances. But how small is the stock of human foresight, at the very best!

Little did any of the parties—the man swimming for his life, the boat pulling to save him, or the midshipman left in charge—anticipate the danger which was brewing up for their amusement, or to increase their peril, behind the cloud-capped peaks of the Sierra Leone. The boat was scarcely out of sight, when there was a deep roll of thunder—a vivid flash—and down came rattling from the mountains, where it had been concentrating its forces in silence, the first burst of the African storm in all its fury—cutting the waves as with a knife, spreading the harbour with a sheet of foam, and sweeping away all obstacles to its impetuous career.

The brig, dragging her anchor at a fearful rate, was fast approaching the dangers of the "middle ground," when the midshipman and his assistant succeeded in letting go a second anchor, and, veering the cable of the first out to the clench, brought both ahead and succeeded in bringing her up. And then his thoughts turned to the crowded boat, and the possible fate of his commander in his laudable attempt: all hopes for the safety of the swimmer were swallowed up by the anticipation of a more fearful disaster still. Midnight was

past,—the storm had spent its fury, though heavy masses of cloud, still drifting in the course of the Tornado, brought in their train strong puffs of wind, which, although of momentary duration, served to keep up the agitation of the waters. All was now painful conjecture! The pitchy darkness of the night, relieved only by the unceasing flashes of lightning, which served to make even the darkness more visible, tended to increase gloomy anticipations; the peals of thunder, to drown the sound of oars, for which the midshipman had been so long listening.

At one, the elements were both silenced—it was a dead calm; and shortly afterwards, to the great joy of all parties, the boat returned in safety, after a hard struggle. The man had been long since given over.

It was late in the middle watch, and the younger of the two officers was still on deck;—and it is possible that he may have been in one of those dreamy moods, consequent upon any great excitement, when anything bordering upon the supernatural seems to have a peculiar charm, and even some ghostly wanderer from the churchyard might himself be welcome. I have good reason to know he was not asleep. Possibly he may have been ruminating upon what seemed the inevitable fate of poor P——, associated with visions of the hungry monsters in their struggle for carcase and limb. At that instant, on the brig's gangway, there reared to its full height, as if rising actually out of the waves, the form of P—— himself, in its full proportions of flesh and limb. In short, the sharks had spared him, whose safety even the African storm had respected; perhaps the latter, by hurrying away the whole of the finny tribe in one confused mass to the depths below, (in like manner as the fire on the American prairie drives before it the wild beasts of the forest and their prey in one united family,) may have been the means of his preservation.

He scarce remembered anything, after the storm first struck him, and must have reached the beach of Pirate's Bay, three miles off, by the mere instinct of a good swimmer. He had confused visions of good Samaritans, in the shape of two stalwart Kroomen, leading him through the jungle to the house of the kind-hearted, hospitable, and lamented M——; then there was a jumble of warm blankets, and less confused

recollections of sundry glasses of warm grog, contributing to his perfect restoration. Once more submitting himself to the guidance of his dark friends, he had entered the frailest of canoes; and being paddled alongside without a splash, he stole back thus noiselessly, to experience the warm greeting of his astonished shipmates, and not a little to startle one of his officers during his dreamy visions of the middle watch. Thus ended the *eventful night*, which, but for a providential interference, had once threatened to close over a threefold misfortune, and all through hoisting up a boat half full of water.

The fate of the two vessels introduced to the reader is soon told. The barque having consigned to the maw of the same hungry escort, that had never deserted her during her passages across the Atlantic, nearly the whole remaining part of her living cargo, was picked up a wreck near the scene of her first capture; while the rakish-looking and frail Susannah, after escaping the dangers of her passage homeward, shortly after the time of the above anecdote made her appearance among the sober-looking wall-sided West Indiamen in the Prince's Dock of Liverpool: and so unquestionable appeared the calling for which she seemed destined, that I have heard she shortly returned to engage once more in the profitable trade, which the guns of an admiral's ship, and the loss of her topmasts in a tornado, had forced her to abandon for a while.

PART III.

A MAN OVERBOARD!!—THE SHIP'S MANŒUVRES FOR HIS RESCUE.

"He shouted; nor his friends had fail'd
To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevail'd,
That, pitiless perforce,
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind."

COWPER. *The Cast-away.*

CHAPTER I.

BY OR OFF THE WIND—HEAVING-TO.

THERE is probably no art which may be said to involve a greater variety of opinions as to the correct execution of its various evolutions, than that of seamanship; nevertheless, there are certain great standard rules, in this as in every other, which, as they were handed down to us by our ancestors even from the earliest ages, must still remain unchanged, and must do so until the end of the chapter,—or until the wonders of steam, or locomotion by the assistance of some other gigantic power yet to be discovered, have totally superseded the use of mast and sail.

It is rather, I should have said, in the minutiæ of detail, or orders connected with the different classes of naval evolutions, that this variety of opinion is contained; increased still further, it is possible, by the zealous wish of so many among our naval officers, of adding their mite of improvement to any particular branch of their profession, by the application of some

plan of their own, by which they purpose to facilitate or expedite a ship's manœuvres.

Whether or not it would be advantageous in our service, as it is in others, to establish one universal system for all the ordinary points of naval economy—of individual ships as of fleets, it is not my province now to discuss: there is, however, little doubt, that since in all matters involving so great an issue as one of life and death, there must be both unity of thought and action, so it is alike indispensable (to revert to the point in question) that the manœuvres of a ship for saving a man overboard with the least possible delay, shall be regulated by both of the above essentials.

On the subject, therefore, of these particular manœuvres, I will offer opinions among the million; opinions which, on this as on every other branch of this treatise, have been grounded on observations of my own, and on the judgment and skill of officers, by whose far greater experience I have been enabled from time to time to glean some fruits for my guidance.

To lower a boat with any degree of safety, the vessel's way must be either stopped, or her way at all events deadened. This is an axiom, of course; but the better way of producing the effects admits of more than one opinion.

First, it is to be effected by the reduction of canvass.

Secondly, by balancing the effect of the sails, by laying one or more to the mast.

Thirdly, by throwing the vessel up in the wind by the action of the helm, as for stays—and righting it, to keep the sails shaking. The latter manœuvre demands a skilful management of the helm, and should only be adopted in a light or moderate breeze, or in ships weak-handed.

To form one general rule as to which of these must be the most successful, is out of the question, so much depends upon the force of wind and weather, and the number of hands.

In light winds it matters little which method be adopted; but since a fast-sailing vessel holds her way a long time under such circumstances, it were as well to heave all aback at the first, laying the vessel to with one sail or the other when she has nearly lost her way. In short, the manœuvre which subjects a vessel to control under *head* and not *stern-way*, in all cases, is the one to adopt. The latter motion, more especially in small vessels, which are only provided with a stern-boat, cannot but tend to increase the danger and difficulty, and often lead to fatal results.

Some officers maintain (as alluded to in the last chapter) that when the yard-tackles are kept in readiness, or actually on the yards, the lee-boom boat may be run out, directly the mainyard flies square, with less risk and better effect than is consequent on the lowering of a quarter-boat.

The plan is indeed an admirable one, which thus

gifts a man-of-war's boom-boat with wings, for more purposes than one—for saving a drowning man especially. In past times, when small vessels, more particularly brigs, were not supplied with quarter-boats, and only carried a small boat at the stern, the plan must have answered admirably.

On the other hand, where quarter-boats are properly manned and fitted, and the ship properly handled, their assistance must be the most effective in nine cases out of ten. The train of reasons, therefore, throughout these pages, is applicable to ships which have them in use.

HEAVING-TO WITH THE MAIN OR FOREYARD SQUARE.

It stands to reason that, in a strong breeze, with the courses set, if the officer of the watch allow the mainyard to fly square before he has taken the mainsail off the ship, or at all events *one of its clues*, it will defy the efforts, not only of his watch but of the hands themselves as they run on deck, to haul it up; moreover, if his top-gallant sails be not lowered at the time he gave the above order, let him look out that his maintop-gallant mast be not hanging an inglorious wreck over the after-part of the cross-trees, from the sudden jerk on its only support in that position, the stay—possibly a rotten one to boot. This casualty many may have witnessed in the ordinary evolution of tacking by

"hauling the mainyard" too quickly in a breeze with the royal still set. Let him also look out for his vessel gathering rapid stern-way, or making a smash among his boats, which the zeal of a multitude of assistants may have succeeded in lowering in so short a space of time; or else, if sailing in line among other ships of a fleet, let him look out for the flying jib-boom of the next ship in his mizen-top. A vessel is not long acquiring stern-way under these circumstances.

The usual routine of orders, more or less, run thus: —Put the helm down! Let go the life-buoy! Clear away the quarter-boats! Let fly the head-sheets! Let go the maintop-bowline! Up mainsail! Square the mainyard! Lower away the lee-cutter!

Sometimes it appears to matter little in what order the words of command follow each other; nevertheless, thereon hinges a vast deal of the success of the manœuvre—that is, in ships where the officer of the watch is allowed to complete what he has already begun, and which should be no more than the system of the ship set down for his guidance, and not where a second and sometimes a third voice is allowed to supersede his own.

The above orders may also follow one after the other with the sound of thunder and the rapidity of lightning, from the mouth of a good officer possessed of nerve, and well up to his work; but if the time be night, and the watch sleeping about the decks, and the watch

below in their hammocks, the officer may esteem himself fortunate if he can get his orders executed with one-twentieth of the rapidity with which he uttered them: nor will he therefore be held culpable should his ship gather stern-way in the interim through the working of an incorrect system; on the contrary, he would be exposing himself to just censure should there be proved to have been any delay in the delivery of his words of command;—or possibly his commanding officer coming up during the delay, and finding that the officer of the watch had only got half through his lesson, would consider himself justified in continuing the necessary process: then another voice chimes in, which had better be silent.

The helm having been put hard down, the headsheets let fly, and the ship being lively in stays, round she must come, if not baulked by the mainyard flying square; then the whole body of the mainsail catching flat aback defies the strength of the whole crew, and paralyzes the force of the rudder: the consequences are evident:—

If the boat has not already succeeded in clearing herself of the ship's side, before the stern-board which immediately follows, her lowering will be a matter of time. If the vessel have come round against the helm, it cannot be effected until the courses are hauled up as they lift, the headyards braced round, the mainyard being left square.

On the other hand, if she have been baulked in stays, she has, nevertheless, been gathering rapid stern-way; and while the courses were on her, and her motion unchanged, a boat cannot have been lowered, and much time must have been lost.

In either case the ship will have gone over a considerable space, widened her distance from the man, and left no vestige of her former wake, unless the life-buoy is burning at the time to guide the boats when they have succeeded in getting clear of the ship.

This is all on the dark side of the question, I admit. But, had nothing gone wrong—had the scene which I have laboured to describe taken place in a well-regulated ship, and one in possession of a good system for these and other occasions where promptitude and collectedness are the grand essentials—a man might have been saved and in his hammock, in considerably less time than I have taken to write it.

The system for the avoidance of these casualties will be given in another place.

CHAPTER II.

SHIPS' MANŒUVRES BY THE WIND—TACKING AND SQUARING THE MAINYARD IN STAYS.

HERE is another knotty point, on which officers still differ, and which often becomes a subject of controversy in our naval messes,—as to whether the manœuvre is likely to hasten or delay the preservation of a man in danger of drowning in the open sea.

It certainly matters little, as I said before, what manœuvre a ship goes through, provided she gets her boats away in safety, and avoids stern-way; which is best guarded against by taking sail off her, or else reducing it to manageable dimensions.

To illustrate the point in question: the hands are called;—"About ship!" or else, "Shorten sail!" The same rapid succession of orders follows as before, with this difference,—"Tacks and sheets! Up mainsail! Square the mainyard! Head braces! Let go and haul! Up foresail!"

Now, this is all plain enough; but the same line of objection applies to it, as in the preceding chapter—Are the orders likely to be as quick in the execution

as in the delivery? The smartest ship's company will scarcely succeed in getting through the whole process without giving the ship stern-way; at all events, during a night watch. In the day-time I have seen the manœuvre eminently successful, the ship hove to in an incredibly short space of time on the other tack, under her three topsails, jib and spanker, and her two quarter-boats already far from the ship.

In fact, there are many advantages in the system:—first, the ship, owing to her change of tack, naturally drifts towards the man, and supports hope in him by the knowledge that his situation has been observed, and his rescue is at hand;—secondly, the boat has less distance to pull in order to reach him.

There are, however, objections even to the most successful performance of the manœuvre. The "lee boat" is specified in the order as the one to be lowered, although both, of course, should be cleared away without any orders whatsoever, on the first alarm. Men, therefore, where there is no regular system observed on these occasions, unmindful of the manœuvre in progress, rush at once to the quarter-boat which is on the lee side when the order is first given, and commence lowering her. The order should ever specify in these matters "starboard" or "port." In the mean time the ship is rapidly flying round on the other tack, and the lee side soon becomes the weather, or the side most exposed to wind and sea.

Had the order given, therefore, been confined to clearing away the "lee boat," here would arise another delay while the weather one was being subjected to the same process; or else, the one which was originally on the lee side having been lowered, before she could clear herself of her tackles the safety of her crew may have become compromised, by her being dashed against the ship's side by the accumulated powers of the wind and sea.

This can hardly, however, be viewed in the light of a serious objection, but would rather point out the necessity of more particularly specifying the nature of the orders given, and the want of a regular system.

Again: supposing the accident to have occurred at night, that the spare fuze-plates of the life-buoy are expended, the original life-buoy lost, or the life-buoy itself deprived, by certain casualties given in a former page, of its powers of emitting the brilliant flame which mainly contributes to its value,—what is to act as a beacon to the boat, which has left the ship during the time of the evolution now under discussion, and, amid the usual bewilderment attendant on cases where men are startled up out of their sleep, before they are well wide awake lowered down into the ocean, at the very time when the ship is actually changing her course and line of wake? They would undoubtedly require some little time for consideration as to the direction to pull, even after a glance has certified them of the nature of

the ship's manœuvre in progress. Once having collected their scattered thoughts, they would at once, to make up for lost time, direct their strenuous efforts of course to the "lee beam" of their vessel. But any space of time, however minute, may be an eternity to a drowning man.

Some officers may have plans to obviate these difficulties, but even in the broad daylight their success must be ever attended with uncertainty. Some may have men stationed in the mizen rigging, in the tops, to point out with their arms the direction which the boats must pull to reach the man—or, if the man be not visible, to enable them to retrace the former wake of the vessel, into which he must have fallen,—or to await his reappearance on the spot where he had been seen actually to fall.

There is, however, no kind of dumb show more ill defined, or attended with less satisfactory results, than the above mode of telegraph, both ashore and afloat, especially when the eye is not on the same line as the arm of the telegrapher;—call to mind representations of naval officers in pictures, and how difficult it is to follow the direction of the eternally pointing arm with which they are intended to be announcing their projects.

Taking, therefore, all points into consideration, however correct it be in theory, and often successful in practice, the manœuvre of *tacking and heaving to*, to

pick up a man overboard, is open to certain objections, which seem hardly to be counterbalanced by the advantages which it offers.

Thus far the remarks have been applicable to single or detached ships. To those of a fleet or squadron, in the usual order of sailing, the manœuvre can hardly be recommended; since, however successfully it might be performed, considering the time of night, and possibility of a weak watch, the ship would be then drifting, not only towards the man in the water, but to a dangerous proximity with the next ship on the line, before the latter could be made aware at night of the sudden change in the course of her leading ship. The effects would naturally be communicated along the whole line, which would have to bear up together, or heave in stays, according to circumstances, and perform the same evolution as the ship which met the accident: by this, a series of signals and manœuvres would be subsequently entailed on the whole fleet, to restore their original order of sailing, and much unnecessary delay of course ensue.

Where a system is in use, it is greatly simplified, and its efficiency beyond measure increased, by its possibility of application to every variety of circumstance,—or, in short, its general comprehensiveness. In the present instance, the manœuvre to which the crew are trained in a detached ship, should be one likewise practicable in her station in line.

When running with studding-sails, the value of a studding-sail boom is seldom much thought of on these occasions, in the hurry to round the ship to; at the same time, there is no reason in the world why, by a little system and management, a well-tried and tough assistant in many a hard chase may not be spared, without in any way compromising the safety of human life.

Accidents, however, will happen, in spite of the best regulations; and that officer would be laying himself open to censure, who, on account of some studding-sail tack, or halyards being foul, suspends his operations of rounding the ship to in a question of life or death. In short, there appears a certain tide of fortune, by which all our manœuvres afloat are more or less influenced; the most zealous, active, and circumspect officer often meets with an accident during a manœuvre in his watch, while the less proficient and foolhardy goes over the course at a canter.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE ADVANTAGES OF AN ESTABLISHED SYSTEM OF MANŒUVRING.

THE full force of the preceding remarks tends to point out the necessity of establishing one general rule for the ship's evolutions, the one best calculated to meet the exigencies of the case in point; a system, once established, to be in no way subjected to change at the caprice of individuals; a system which would certainly appear as essential to the safety of a man overboard in danger of drowning, as for an alarm of fire;—or in short, for any manœuvre of a ship, the better to concentrate the forces of her crew.

In ships where there is one system in practice for the performance of every kind of evolution, (I would not extend the Station Bill to the minor operations, as is the case in the French navy, but which adding to its complexity must detract from its efficacy,) there can be neither noise nor confusion; they are invariably successful in their evolutions; and are, moreover, less liable to the ordinary casualties;—that is, those ships

where the spirit of the Station Boards is acted up to, and they are not displayed about her decks for the mere purpose of setting off the master-touches of the ship's scribe or painter.

Surely, if it is considered fair to allow a man the satisfaction of the study and perusal of the precautionary arrangements for protecting himself and ship from the fearful consequences of fire at sea, and to learn where his own efforts are to be directed, there seems every reason why he should be indulged, with equal propriety, with the means of surveying the efficiency of the method which will be used for the preservation of his life if it be put in peril by the "opposite element."

There are probably few, who have experience in scenes of the kind, that may not be able to call to mind such expressions as these, (improper ones, I allow,) on the part of some old growler or other, of which there is seldom any lack in a man-of-war: "Well! I would not fall overboard in that ship, for a trifle!" "If you did, I would not give much for your chance!" &c.

The consequences of a want of system, or the evils of a diversity of opinion, as to the manœuvres for the purpose now in discussion, need hardly be considered. Supposing, however, for the sake of illustrating an extreme case, that the officer of the watch at the time of an accident is an advocate for the "tacking system;" and without hesitation, on the first alarm, pipes "About

ship!" puts the helm down, and is proceeding with the usual fling of orders, when up rushes the first lieutenant, and before he has become acquainted with the nature of the manœuvre in hand, and knowing there is no time to be lost, almost by the force of habit commences with a loud voice his own plan of carrying on; —seeing the ship all aback, the courses still on her, the helm down, he orders at once the latter to be righted, the courses hauled up, the mainyard squared, the headsheets hauled aft; and thus, in a very short space of time, succeeds in effectually counteracting the effect of every order previously given; while the officer of the watch himself abandons the quarter-deck to his superior, retires to the forecastle, or rushes into one of the quarter-boats. In the mean time, a higher personage than either comes up the ladder, finds the ship aback or in irons, and going astern with fearful rapidity; and at once considers himself justified in immediate interference, reserving his expressions of surprise to a fitter season.

Are three voices, all giving different orders at their full pitch, re-echoed by other shrill voices and pipes about the deck, likely to decrease the usual bewilderment of the occasion, and remove the alarm which is ever attendant on the scene, more especially during the night? Is the confusion of tongues likely to inspire the crew with confidence, or lead to that unity of action and purpose, so essential to the proper handling of the ship, and the safety of the drowning

man? Even the ship herself, as if perplexed by the counteracting forces of both helm and sails, at last fairly takes the bit between her teeth, and assumes her own management.

Admitting the improbability of the above case, it is not impossible, by any means, that some few individuals may have lost their lives through the want of system, or the ill-directed efforts of the crew, of which they once formed a part, to save them. Seldom, it is to be hoped, in men-of-war; as for merchant vessels, from the limited number on deck at one time, a loss through the above cause is less to be wondered at; those vessels, however, are likely to be still shorter handed, who are too ready to plead their want of hands as an excuse for relaxing their efforts, and for abandoning a man to his lonely grave in the ocean.

Some merchant vessels, even with their limited resources, manage matters as well as others in their full strength; and many a man has been rescued from the waters by the effects of helm only, or what is termed a "judicious luff;" the forces which have happened to be upon deck at the time of the accident having been directed to the boat, and not to the braces of the ship. Let the prize-master note this fact!

In a man-of-war, there is no doubt that the system of Stationing which looks upon the watch below as a reserve, and the officer of the watch who confines himself to the same routine of orders which his watch are

most accustomed to carry into execution, is the one most likely to save his man. Let him, however, by all means, at the time of an accident, pipe the hands, especially in a breeze. The men are sure to move quicker into their stations, and his attempt is thereby rendered doubly sure, although, under favourable circumstances, he may have done all the needful before the *watch below* have reached the deck. A man's safety, or in fact the success of any manœuvre, does not so much depend on the nature of the manœuvre itself, as on the system by which it is carried out.

The best of plans, not to speak of its possible abuse, carries along with it its disadvantages: in what the latter consist, may be a mere matter of opinion; it is very certain, however, that a system strictly acted up to covers a multitude of defects in the plan. And it may be admitted also as a fact, that the plan whose execution involves the smallest number of details, the least manual labour, and the fewest words of command, is the one most likely to prove successful. I would admit no exception of wind or weather, or other aggravating causes, which must needs render more difficult the effort to save.

Whether is it, that the seaman is more careful of his footing, more tenacious of his grasp, in the storm than in the calm? or is it that Providence makes more especial watch over his safety during those seasons when the elements themselves seem to be conspiring

against him? The question needs no discussion. Let rather the naval reader call to mind how numerous have been the cases, during his experience, of men falling overboard through the variety of causes detailed in this treatise, and how few are those when it has been found necessary to abandon the struggler to his fate, from the impracticability of detaching a boat to his rescue.[1]

NOTE TO CHAPTER III.

Note (1), p. 141.

THE SAILOR'S GRAVE.

One man only have I seen thus abandoned to his fate; and there were certain details connected with his melancholy end, which have tended the more indelibly to impress it on my memory.

On a dark squally day, or during one of those gales occasionally known within the tropics, as they are in the tempestuous regions of the higher latitudes, where the elements love to harass the seaman anxious to keep sail on his vessel, by first luring him by one of those treacherous lulls to spread the darling canvass,—

> "A faint deceitful calm,
> A fluttering gale, the demon sends before,
> To tempt the spreading sail;"—

and then, as the same poet says,

> "Down at once
> Precipitant descends a mingled mass
> Of roaring winds and flame, and rushing floods;"—

Preparatory to one of these well known outbursts, a sloop of war was foiled in the attempt of hauling up her reefed mainsail, by the mainsheet being foul outside. The boatswain's mate G——, as smart a seaman as he was universally beloved, jumped over the quarter-deck hammock netting into the main channels, pipe in mouth. For a few seconds the well-known sounds of the "pipe" were heard, as poor G——, in the height of his exertions to drag a rope from the

mainsheet block, was endeavouring to call the attention of those inside: in the next, the loud wind whistled through the rigging; a sea struck the vessel at the same time; the sail cleared itself with a sound like thunder! * * * *

"The seaman's whistle
Is as a whisper, in the ear of death
Unheard!!"

He was seen no more; but the well-known whistle was said to have been heard for an instant after the fatal plunge, as if in one long piercing note poor G—— had wished to waft with his last breath a long adieu to his shipmates, or had "piped" his own exit over the side of his floating home. And when darkness intervened, as each successive squall swept sullenly past the ship, the same plaintive note, as though borne on the gale, would strike faintly upon the ear of some dreamy or superstitious watcher, (for this was the *fated sloop!*) and his wandering visions still turned to the far distant speck in her late wake, where the poor boatswain's mate, pipe in mouth, and in the zealous performance of his duty, had lately settled down into the unfathomable depths of eternity.

In the morning it was a dead calm; the surface of the broad expanse was unruffled; not a bubble marked the spot; the sea-birds who had shrieked his dirge, had long since abandoned it for their ocean roost; and the life-buoy, floating on the surface, may have been as a head-stone to mark the site of the sailor's grave.*

The sketch chosen by the author, for a frontispiece to the present treatise, although not originally intended by its tasteful designer to illustrate the above anecdote, has been annexed, from motives which may find a value in the eyes of a portion of its readers. The merit of originality of design, properly belongs to an old messmate of the author's during many years' service afloat, and was purposed to represent an incident not under a tropical sky, but on the dreary expanse of the solitary Pacific, within the haunts of the "wandering albatross." It was subsequently copied for the author,

* See Frontispiece.

by an officer of the same ship, during the period of a long and painful illness, which had already once brought the latter to death's door, in the prime of his youth, and on a far distant shore. Poor Spear was not, however, destined to breathe his last in a strange land, nor was he consigned to a grave on the lonely ocean, an anticipation which may possibly have cast its shadow over the work of his pencil. He was spared to reach his native coast, though not the home of his birth;—a devoted parent soothed his dying hour, and his spirit was wafted aloft to Him who gave it, with a mother's blessing.

The memory of this most amiable officer is fondly cherished by all who knew him during his service afloat; by none more than the author, who was much with him in his latter days.

"No poet wept him; but the page
Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear."

COWPER.

CHAPTER IV.

ON GIVING THE ALARM.

THERE is an objection, and one apparently without sufficient reason on its side to invalidate it, to a raising of the cry of "Man overboard!" on the occasion of an accident; a cry which, of all others, would seem best calculated to infuse a little life among the sleepers on the decks below, and bring them tumbling up the ladders at no measured pace, in their eagerness to put their best shoulder to the wheel to save a shipmate's life.

For the cry, is commonly substituted either the pipe "Shorten sail!" or "About ship!" according to the particular fancy of the officer of the watch, or custom of the ship (if there be an established form); or, in some cases, perhaps, no pipe at all. The alarm being allowed to spread itself about the decks like wildfire, increases of course in magnitude like the avalanche in its headlong course; driving men in one instinctive rush, and in the height of that bewilderment which has been so often touched upon, up the ladders of a

ship to the deck. When there, many precious moments of time may be lost by their crowding about the gangways to gain a sight of the life-buoy, or to pass conjectures among each other as to the cause which has drawn them on deck, the details of the catastrophe, or the name of its victim.

Even when called to their duty by a well-known voice—even then they often appear to rush about from rope to rope like a flock of startled sheep, driven rather by a kind of instinct than by intention; and thus, through a frequent misapplication of their forces, much time is often lost on these occasions, which can ill be spared.

Taking an impartial view, therefore, of both sides of the question, let each reader judge for himself whether the objection to the more direct method of spreading the alarm be founded on reason or on prejudice.

Many persons may maintain that a pipe such as that of "Man overboard!" more especially during the stillness of a night watch, is of itself calculated to produce that confusion and sense of bewilderment which I have laboured to describe, and which I am more inclined to associate with no pipe at all.

In the first place, let them answer, Why is the *fire-bell* ever allowed to be rung? What sound can strike more harshly on the seaman's ears than one which calls him up in the dead hour of the night?—that startling peal of the bell which summons his aid to stifle the

rage of an element far more formidable to those who dwell in a wooden house than its opposite, and whose powers of destruction are not confined to one or more, but may extend to a whole community!

Does the sharp peal of the bell on board a ship—the signal generally in force for announcing so serious a calamity as that of fire—tend to confuse or bewilder the ship's crew, or to paralyze their efforts when most called for? Such an announcement is indeed calculated to startle for the moment, but there is no reason why it should confuse or bewilder its hearers. It might produce similar effects, were there no established form of stations in a ship, in the event of an alarm of the kind, or were the *fire stations* not occasionally to be read and exercised; by this method men and officers are made familiar with the different precautionary arrangements best adapted for the occasion, and without which the alarm of fire might paralyze, and that with good cause. Some persons may raise objections to the ringing of the "fire-bell" for purposes of exercise, on the principle of the old fable. This principle, or rather moral, is totally misapplicable to a man-of-war, or to a disciplined body of men, who, whether they be piped up, or rung up, or ordered up by the voice of their officers, no matter which, or for what purpose, up they must go.

Even supposing the story of the shepherd boy and the wolf to be applicable to the case in point, one

reflection very naturally suggests itself: Were the former, however well armed for the encounter with his enemy, not to exercise himself occasionally in the arms supplied to him for his destruction, or were he to delay giving the alarm of "Wolf!" until the midnight prowler was in the act of scattering his flock, his shouting then could avail him but little. In like manner, as it relates to a ship, were it not the established custom in our navy to be provided with *fire stations*—or could a case be produced where a commanding officer, trusting to his good fortune, has omitted to give the alarm of fire until the flames were spreading through his ship—a sharp peal of the bell at such a season would naturally create similar effects to one on the steam-wharf when the packet is casting off, stimulating her tardy passengers in one confused mass to a rush towards the water.

In the event of fire, therefore, it would be found necessary to station one-half of the ship's company as sentinels over the other half; since, even under the present dispensation, a certain number of them is considered necessary to stay the plunge of the desperado and panic-stricken. As it is, when the *fire stations* are occasionally read, and the men put through their facings as for an actual alarm, the ringing of the "fire-bell," like the quick beat of the drum to quarters during the hour of night, brings men tumbling up the ladders out of their hammocks in the full spirit of

confidence that, however formidable their enemy, they will not leave the deck but as conquerors.

Instances of fire are known to be rare in these times, although, by means of the gigantic strides of commerce, whole fleets now throng the tracks which were formerly ploughed by single ships, many among their number using the dread element itself as their propeller.

The liabilities to fire of a body floating in water are not of themselves great; yet the precautions for avoiding or resisting its ravages are, or ought to be, unlimited. Instances of spontaneous combustion within damp slop-rooms, ill ventilated coalbunkers and coal-holes, wet hay-bags, are still occasionally heard of; but in a man-of-war they can only be attributable to carelessness or neglect, seldom to ignorance of certain well-known laws. Even the dangers of fire incidental to ships, chiefly in the tropics, by the electric fluid, are almost invariably counteracted by the deluge of rain which usually accompanies it, and which serves to disarm the storm of its chief powers of mischief. Human ingenuity has effected the rest, and even called down the aid of Nature's great phenomena for facilitating our purposes ashore and afloat. Now, orders for the disposal of Britain's bulwarks may be transmitted in a few seconds of time, not only from one port to another along our own coast, but bid fair to extend to those on the opposite shores, and announce the intentions of our enemies almost as soon as they are known to themselves.

Digression is common to all writers, and may be pardoned the more readily in the present treatise, of which the thread is nearly spun out; its purport throughout has had reference to another element than fire, the aid of the latter having been called in more than once for purposes of mere association.

If, as I have endeavoured before to prove, there is not a shadow of objection, but on the contrary much advantage, arising from the occasional ringing of the *fire-bell*, in order to ring men quickly into their stations, and that without any great paralyzing effects, why should the direct pipe of "Man overboard!"—a casualty which seldom involves the risk of more than a single life—be looked upon with the eye of prejudice? On the contrary, let men be made by habit, in this as in all other cases, familiar with the duties of their station, and even with the shrill sound of the pipe itself (not making it too common), and let prosers apply to the practice the moral of the Wolf and the Shepherd Boy if so they please,—I'll answer for it there are few men on shipboard whom habit has so hardened into skulkers, who would not be ready to respond to the pipe, and rush to their stations in double time.

On the other hand, let an officer of a night watch, even in what is termed a smart ship, pipe "About ship!" or "Shorten sail!"—calls which we hear every day of our lives at sea—how many skulkers, or men who style themselves *hard sleepers* or *hard hearers*, are there who

are constantly being brought under his notice! how many more would there be, were they not screened by the darkness of the night, by a party-serving ship's police, or else by their own shipmates!—a practice unfortunately too common, and which one would imagine that the latter might be anxious to avoid, considering that the character of the skulker is universally despised, and that the delinquency of the absentee must ever entail additional weight upon the shoulders of the willing and active.

Nevertheless, as it is in the case of the drunkard, so it is with defaulters in general; they will never be induced to draw a line between the conscientious informer, and the paltry coward who in dread of his fate turns king's evidence with no other motive than to secure his own pardon by the sacrifice of his accomplices. But, to speak from experience, I fully believe that the most hardened skulker on ordinary occasions is seldom found wanting at a time like this.

When our efforts, therefore, for saving life are ineffectual, their failure may be attributed rather to the absence or imperfection of the great essential detailed in the last chapter for regulating the strength of the crew, than to any want of physical force through the voluntary absence of individuals composing it.

Let there be one pipe—strictly one—on each deck; not a shout, not an echo, after the call of the boatswain and his mates;—not a voice to be heard on the upper

deck save one—that of the officer of the watch, or, at all events, the officer in charge of the deck at the time of the accident. Surely the latter, and not the officer who has just left his cabin, seems the one best calculated to carry out the manœuvre he has already commenced, whose details should be grounded on the system of the ship sanctioned by the captain himself. Nor can any other interference be necessary, unless the officer of the watch shows symptoms of having lost his presence of mind, or else his voice by previous bawling.

In short, where one system is observed from the first, and men are made familiar with their stations,—the ropes lead naturally into the seamen's hands, as the muskets spring to the shoulders of a well-drilled company of recruits. Thus, in course of time, the sailor as well as the soldier is guided by the tones of his officer's voice, and by the order in which his commands are uttered, rather than by the words themselves. This is applicable to the occasions of ordinary manœuvres, when the soldier and sailor are more or less to be looked upon as pieces of machinery: let them remain so. At such seasons, when it is found necessary to animate the machine with an extra touch of the Promethean spark, what great ends have been gained by a simple word, the display of a few flags, or even an increased energy in the tone of their leader's voice, though the orders be the same they have been accustomed to on the parade ground or on occasions of common exercise!

By such simple stimulants as these our armies and our fleets have been led, and will again on some future day be led, to certain victory. And even by such simple stimulants as these, now that our naval wars have ceased for a period, are we the better able to bind even the angry elements to our will, while one powerful arm of the British service is directed, less to the destruction, than to the noble cause of saving life.

Appendix.

A SYSTEM OF MANŒUVRES

SUGGESTED BY THE AUTHOR, TO BE PRACTISED BY THE OFFICER OF A WATCH AT SEA AT THE PIPE, "MAN OVERBOARD!!"

N. B.—The Stations are more particularly adapted for a man-of-war. The system of manœuvres, however, is such that it may be adopted by any vessels with a limited number of men. The Sketches at the head of each Manœuvre are designed to represent it in full progress, but not completed. They are the work, not of a professed artist, but of one of the seamen gunners (Jas. Batey) lately serving on board the "Collingwood," while she had the flag in the Pacific, and were designed by the author solely to illustrate the Manœuvres to which they are attached, as they may be supposed to affect the *sails* of the ship. Should they be found to do so, the work of the artist may be spared any closer scrutiny. The lee-quarter boat (contrary to the usual routine) is represented in many cases as lowered while the ship holds her way. Such is in accordance with Plan II., recommended in the Treatise.

CASE I.

A MODERATE BREEZE.

ON A WIND, UNDER PLAIN SAIL, WITH OR WITHOUT ROYALS, OR THE YARDS BRACED "WELL FORWARD."—TO ROUND-TO AND LOWER BOTH QUARTER-BOATS.

On the first alarm, orders to be given after the pipe by the officer of the watch—"Put the helm down!" (or partly down, according to circumstances)—"Weather fore and main clew-garnets!" "Square the cross jack-yard!" "Up courses!" The royals, if set, are always clewed up and furled by the *top division*, the top-gallant sails lowered, the head-sheets kept fast. The weather-clews of courses hauled up first, then lee ones; the flying-jib always hauled down.

When the weather-clew of mainsail is nearly up and wind out of the sails—"Square the mainyard!" "Right the helm!" and when she falls off—"Brace up the cross jack-yard!" Ease off head-sheets (if necessary). Keep the ship hove-to with head-way, that she may be more under command, and the boat be lowered as soon as possible.

N.B.—The lee-braces are always to be *checked*, and bowlines let go without orders, if the ship be on a wind, but never with studding-sails set.

GENERAL STATION-BILL FOR THE CREW OF A MAN-OF-WAR AT THE PIPE, "MAN OVERBOARD!!"

At the first sound of the pipe the whole part of topmen (if one division only be aloft) go aloft *without orders*, clew up and furl the royals, leaving hands on deck to attend the braces. The *watch on deck* are always stationed to the ropes on the *weather* side: *fore part*, forward; *after part*, aft. The *after* part run the weather main-clew garnet up, then man the weather head-braces, in case it be necessary to lay the head-yards aback, leaving the lee-clew and gear of the mainsail to be hauled up by the *watch below* as they come up, the latter being stationed on the *lee* side of the deck to the lee-gear and lee-braces. The *fore* part of the watch man the weather main-brace and maintop-bowline (it is presumed the braces lead *across*), and wait order to "Square the mainyard!" then haul up the weather fore clew-garnet and gear of the foresail. The *fore* part of the *watch below* haul up lee-clew and lee-gear of foresail, then man the lee mainbrace and bowline. The mizen-topmen and part of afterguard stationed on ordinary occasions, attend to the after-yards, spanker-brails, and outhaul.

STATIONS OF THE LOOK-OUT MEN AT NIGHT.

Forecastle.

WEATHER NETTING—*usually a Forecastle-man.*—Lets go head-bowlines and attends fore-tack.

LEE NETTING—*usually a Fore or Maintop-man.*—Lets go after-bowlines, then attends fore-sheet.

Gangways.

WEATHER WAIST-NETTING—*one of the Gunners.*—Lets go main-tack, or attends it.

LEE WAIST-NETTING—*one of the Afterguard or Mizen-topmen.*—Lets go cross-jack braces and mizentop-bowline, top-gallant and royal brace, then attends fore-sheet.

Top-gallant and Royal Halyard-men.

FORE-TOPGALLANT AND ROYAL.—Lets go fore-topgallant and royal halyards, checks lee main-brace, and points topgallant and royal yards.

MAIN-TOPGALLANT AND ROYAL.—Lets go main-topgallant and royal halyards, then checks lee head-braces without orders, and points topgallant and royal yards.

MIZEN-TOPGALLANT AND ROYAL.—Lets go mizen-topgallant and royal halyards, and lee main-topsail and topgallant braces, and points topgallant and royal yards.

CASE II.

A MODERATE OR FRESH BREEZE.

YARDS BRACED FORWARD FOR WIND ABEAM OR ABAFT, WITH STUDDING-SAILS SET ON ONE SIDE, WITH OR WITHOUT LOWER STUDDING-SAIL.—TO LOWER "LEE" BOAT, OR BOTH, WHEN THERE IS NOT MUCH SEA ON.

On the first alarm—"Put the helm down!" (as before) and right it when the wind is out of the sails. "Weather fore and main-clew garnets!" "Studding-sail downhauls!" "Up courses!" The royals are furled as before, and as soon as the top-gallant sails are lowered, the top-gallant studding-sails are hauled into the tops without orders by the part aloft; and when the leaches of the other studding-sails lift—"Lower away!" When the mainsail is nearly up—"Square the mainyard!" "Brace forward the head-yards!" The fore-topmast studding-sail to be hauled in on the foreyard, the main always on deck; the lower studding-sail, if set, to be tripped up and lowered in-board if the breeze be strong; otherwise, to hang in the tripping-line.

N.B.—If a ship be under this sail at "night," the yards square, and the wind nearly "aft," much time may be gained by rounding her to by the helm being put *up* and righted when the sails lift. By this manœuvre the studding-sails, becoming *lee* ones, may be kept up until a boat is lowered. The ship lays-to as in Case III.

GENERAL STATION-BILL FOR THE CREW OF A MAN-OF-WAR AT THE PIPE, "MAN OVERBOARD!!"

A sufficient number of topmen, forecastle-men, and gunners (if the main-topmast studding-sail is set), go aloft *without orders*, clew up and furl the royals, gather the studding-sails in on the yards, overhaul lifts and trusses, and hold themselves fast for the braces being gathered in. The *fore-part* of the *watch on deck*, on their proper side (as in Case I.), run the jib up without orders and man the main-brace and lower studding-sail tripping-line (if the sail be set); a few hands gathering in the slack of the studding down-hauls as they are lowered. The *after-part* of the *watch on deck* haul out the driver, brace forward the fore and cross-jack yard. The gear of the foresail is left for the *watch below* as they come on deck, who assist at the braces, and gather in the studding-sails if necessary. The *watch below* assist as they arrive on deck.

STATIONS OF THE LOOK-OUT MEN AT NIGHT.

Forecastle.

WEATHER NETTING—*usually a Forecastle-man.*—Lets go head-bowlines, lowers the fore-topmast studding-sail, then attends fore-tack.

LEE NETTING—*usually a Fore or Maintop-man.*—Lets go after-bowlines and attends fore-sheet.

Gangways.

WEATHER WAIST-NETTING—*one of the Gunners.*—Lets go main-tack, and attends it; then assists to gather in the main-topmast studding-sail.

LEE WAIST-NETTING—*one of the Afterguard or Mizen-topmen.*—Lets go cross-jack and after-bowlines, and attends topgallant and royal braces; then attends fore-sheet.

Topgallant and Royal Halyard-men.

FORE-TOPGALLANT AND ROYAL.—Lets go fore-topgallant and royal halyards, checks lee main-brace without orders, and attends topgallant and royal braces.

MAIN-TOPGALLANT AND ROYAL.—Lets go main-topgallant and royal halyards, then attends topgallant and royal braces.

MIZEN-TOPGALLANT AND ROYAL.—Lets go mizen-topgallant and royal halyards, and lee main-topsail and topgallant braces, and points the topgallant and royal yards.

CASE III.

A MODERATE OR FRESH BREEZE.

YARDS "SQUARED."—WIND AFT OR QUARTERING, WITH "ALL' STUDDING-SAILS, WITH OR WITHOUT A HEAD-SAIL HOISTED, AND THE DRIVER CLEAR FOR SETTING.—TO LOWER "STARBOARD" BOAT, OR BOTH, WHEN THERE IS NOT MUCH SEA ON.

On the first alarm—"Put the helm a starboard!" and right it to bring the wind abeam. "Man the port fore-clew garnet!" "Lower studding-sail tripping-lines!" "Studding-sail downhauls!" "Up foresail!" "Trip up!" The starboard studding-sails may be hauled down at once, or gathered in on the yards as before (Case II.) When the weather-leaches of port studding-sails lift —"Lower away!" "Haul out the driver!" The ship lays-to with the yards square (except the cross-jack) and the wind abeam, while she is ready for either head or sternway by a proper management of the helm, jib, and spanker, or may be brought to a standstill. The latter is scarcely to be recommended for the sake of the helm,

which is then useless. This is decidedly the quickest way of rounding a ship to under these circumstances, since she traverses only eight points of the compass, and in a moderate breeze lays-to beautifully in this position, the braces being kept *in hand* (as in page 68).

GENERAL STATION-BILL FOR THE CREW OF A MAN-OF-WAR AT THE PIPE, "MAN OVERBOARD!!"

The whole of the topmen, forecastle-men, and gunners, stationed aloft for "shortening sail," go aloft *without orders*. The *port* side is here to be looked upon as the *weather* side. The starboard or *lee* studding-sails are first lowered, as in Case II., and the driver hauled out by the *watch on deck*, on their proper side, as before; the weather-clew of foresail hauled up by the *fore-part*, the driver run out, and the brails then kept in hand by the *after-part*. If no head-sail be set it is hoisted at once *without orders*, and the sheet kept manned. The *watch below* assist on their *proper side* as they arrive on deck.

STATIONS OF THE LOOK-OUT MEN AT NIGHT.

Forecastle.

WEATHER NETTING—*usually a Forecastle-man.*—Lowers foretop-studsail on weather side, then lowers studding-sail.

LEE NETTING—*usually a Fore or Maintop-man.*—Lowers foretop-mast studding-sail on lee side, then lowers studding-sail.

Gangways.

WEATHER WAIST-NETTING—*one of the Gunners.*—Attends fore-sheet on weather side.

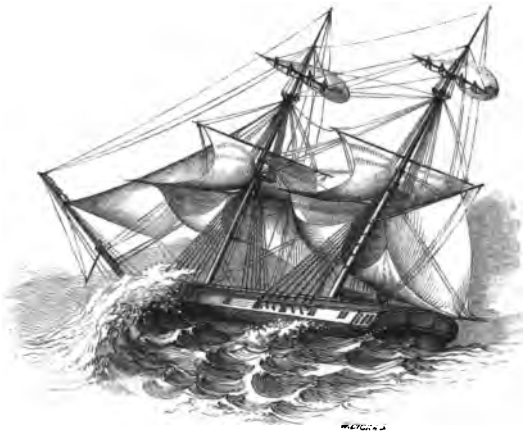
LEE WAIST-NETTING—*one of the Afterguard or Mizen-topmen.*—Attends fore-sheet on lee side, and lowers starboard maintopmast studding-sail.

Topgallant and Royal Halyard-men.

FORE-TOPGALLANT AND ROYAL.—Lets go royal halyards and fore-topgallant halyards after studding-sails are lowered.

MAIN-TOPGALLANT AND ROYAL.—Lets go royal halyards and main-topgallant halyards after studding-sails are lowered.

MIZEN-TOPGALLANT AND ROYAL.—Lowers mizen royal and top-gallant yards, stretches along and attends the driver outhaul.



CASE IV.

A STRONG BREEZE.

CLOSE HAULED, DOUBLE OR TREBLE REEFS OVER COURSES.—TO LOWER "LEE" BOAT ONLY.

On the first alarm (as in Case I.) the ship is baulked from stays by the helm being only put half down, the head-sheets kept fast, and the weather-clews of both courses hauled up at once; for which the strength of the watch is sufficient. "Put the helm half down!" "Up courses!"—"In topgallant-sails!"—when the weather-clew is up—"Square the mainyard!" when the topsails lift—"Lower away!" clew them down.

N.B.—In brigs or small vessels sailing near the wind, which soon lose their way when luffed-to in a strong breeze, and in a sea, the mainyard should not be *squared* until the boat is lowered, to preclude the chances of a sternboard. The same rule should apply to all vessels which, under these circumstances, are soon brought to a standstill. The lee-braces are always *checked*, and bowlines let go, without orders. When topgallant-sails are set over double reefs they are clewed up and furled by the topmen.

GENERAL STATION-BILL FOR THE CREW OF A MAN-OF-WAR AT THE PIPE, "MAN OVERBOARD!!"

The topgallant-yardmen go aloft *without orders* and furl the topgallant sails. The *watch on deck*, on their proper side, man the weather clew-garnets and buntlines, clew up the topgallant sails, clew down the topsails, haul out the reef-tackles, and set taut the buntlines and lee-braces. The weather main-brace (if the order be given to "Square the yard!") is manned by the *fore-part* of the *watch on deck;* the lee one kept in hand. The jib-sheet and driver-brails are kept manned.

N.B.—In a brig, the extra hands stationed at the cross-jack braces work the boom-mainsail, the peak-halyards and tack-tracing-line being kept in hand during the manœuvre. The *watch below* assist on their proper side of the deck.

STATIONS OF THE LOOK-OUT MEN AT NIGHT.

Forecastle.

WEATHER NETTING—*usually a Forecastle-man.*—Lets go foretop-sail halyards on weather side, then checks head-bowlines, attends fore-tack.

LEE NETTING—*usually a Fore or Maintop-man.*—Lets go foretop-sail halyards on lee side, then attends fore-sheet.

Gangways.

WEATHER WAIST-NETTING—*one of the Gunners.*—Lets go main-topsail-lift-jiggers.

LEE WAIST-NETTING—*one of the Afterguard or Mizentop-men.*—Lets go lee maintop-sail halyards, then checks lee head-braces.

CASE V.

A STRONG BREEZE.

WIND ABAFT THE BEAM.—YARDS WELL IN.—TO LOWER "LEE" BOAT ONLY.

On the first alarm put the helm half down and ease it as the sails lift; in a strong breeze or fresh gale it is not a question whether the helm is to be put half or whole down, the ship must be brought-to in proportion as the sail is got off her and the yards trimmed; otherwise no time is gained, but some damage may be occasioned by overhurry. "Weather fore and main-clew garnets!" "Up courses!" "Lower away the topsails! "Lee head-braces!" "Brace forward!" Don't wait for the lee-clew of the foresail; brace the head-yards forward at once, but not sharp up; then let the ship lay-to as before (Case IV.) The watch below, as they come up, assist at the lee-gear and lee-braces.

N.B.—In vessels of all sizes *running* as above, of course the fore or main-topsail (according to which of the two the ship lies-to best under), is left aback, the weather braces being hauled in, and the yard regularly squared afterwards.

GENERAL STATION-BILL FOR THE CREW OF A MAN-OF-WAR AT THE PIPE, "MAN OVERBOARD!!"

Those men *only* who are stationed aloft "tacking ship" to bear the backstays aft, &c. go aloft *without orders*. The weather-clew of the mainsail is hauled by all the topmen, gunners, and afterguard (not stationed at the cross-jack braces), the remainder of the *after* part brace forward the head-yards at once, haul out the driver, then haul up the *lee*-gear of mainsail, clew down the topsails, haul out the reef-tackles, and set taut the buntlines. The *fore-part* man the weather fore-clew garnet and main buntlines (where they lead forward), then lay the mainyard square. The *watch below*, as they come up, assist on their proper side.

STATIONS OF THE LOOK-OUT MEN AT NIGHT.

Forecastle.

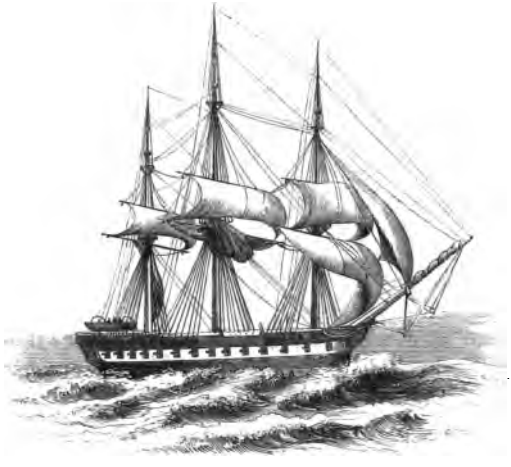
WEATHER NETTING—*usually a Forecastle-man.*—Lets go fore-topsail halyards, checks head-bowlines, attends fore-tack.

LEE NETTING—*usually a Fore or Maintop-man.*—Lets go lee fore-topsail halyards, checks lee main-brace and after-bowlines, and attends fore-sheet.

Gangways.

WEATHER WAIST-NETTING—*one of the Gunners.*—Attends the main-tack.

LEE WAIST-NETTING—*one of the Afterguard or Mizen-topmen.*—Attends the fore-sheet.



CASE VI.

BLOWING STRONG.

WIND QUARTERING OR NEARLY AFT, TREBLE OR CLOSE-REEFED TOPSAILS AND FORESAIL, NO MAINSAIL SET, YARDS NEARLY SQUARE, STAY-SAIL UP.—TO ROUND-TO IF IT BE CONSIDERED ADVISABLE TO RISK A BOAT.

On the first alarm, here again the quartermaster, who takes the wheel, must keep his eyes on the sails, so that the ship may be rounded-to without detriment to the spars, or the boat about to be lowered, by her acquiring stern-way. "Fore clew-garnets!" "Top-sail-clewlines!" "Up foresail!" "Clew down the topsails!" "Brace forward!" Keep the staysail-sheet flowing, if the ship be sluggish in coming-to (which is unlikely), and haul aft trysail-sheet, while the yards are being braced forward. The ship lays-to with the yards pointed and topsails on the cap, and the reef-tackles hauled out.

N.B. If the topsails are close-reefed, the main is not lowered.

GENERAL STATION-BILL FOR THE CREW OF A MAN-OF-WAR AT THE PIPE, "MAN OVERBOARD!!"

The *hands* repair to their stations for "shortening sail" and "wearing ship," and their strength is directed to the foresail and *lee braces*, &c.

STATIONS OF THE LOOK-OUT MEN AT NIGHT.

Forecastle.

WEATHER NETTING—*usually a Forecastle-man.*—Attends fore-sheet on port side, and lets go topsail-lifts, fore-lifts, and trusses.

LEE NETTING—*usually a Fore or Maintop-man.*—Lets go starboard fore-topsail halyards, sticks out starboard fore-sheet, lets go fore-lifts and trusses.

Gangways.

WEATHER WAIST-NETTING—*one of the Gunners.*—Lets go main lifts and trusses, and port topsail lift-jiggers.

LEE WAIST-NETTING—*one of the Afterguard or Mizentop-men.*—Lets go main lifts and trusses, and starboard topsail lift-jigger.

CASE VII.

A FRESH GALE.

WIND AFT.—CLOSE-REEFED FORE AND MAIN-TOPSAILS, A FORE-TOPSAIL ONLY OVER FORESAIL; FORE-STAYSAIL HOISTED, AND MAIN OR MIZEN-TRYSAIL CLEAR.—TO ROUND-TO IF CONSIDERED POSSIBLE TO LOWER A BOAT WITHOUT ANY GREAT RISK.

If a man be unfortunate enough to fall overboard under such circumstances, his case appears a desperate one, even supposing the ship to be supplied with a life-boat, and the lowering and *slipping* to be effected in safety. He may, nevertheless, have possibly succeeded in laying hold of the life-buoy, or one *to which the line is attached*, as recommended in the treatise, if the ship have one in use; and if a large ship, she may, I presume, generally be rounded-to without any great risk; at all events, in this, as in the preceding case, the officer of the watch at the time is not justified in rounding-to without orders from the captain, and must be guided, therefore, by his orders. Much time is thus necessarily lost, especially at night; nor will any be gained by putting the helm down either one way or the other, before a part of the sail is off her, and the braces in hand. I presume there can be only one way for the ship to be rounded-to, if

such is the captain's intention. "Fore-topsail clewlines and buntlines!" "Port fore-clew garnet!" "Clew up the fore-topsail!" "Up foresail!" "Starboard braces!" "Brace forward the afteryards!" "Ease the helm down to starboard!" keeping the sails just lifting and staysail-sheet steadied aft, as the ship will fly-to rapidly when the fore-topsail clewlines are well started and weather-clew of the foresail. "Brace forward head-yards!" "Aft trysail-sheet!" The ship lays-to, her yards all pointed, under the mizen-trysail and main-topsail; if unnecessary, the staysail may be hauled down.

GENERAL STATION-BILL FOR THE CREW OF A MAN-OF-WAR AT THE PIPE, "MAN OVERBOARD!!"

The hands are called to "Shorten sail!" "Wear ship!" and the stations observed for that manœuvre, as in the preceding case.

GENERAL REMARKS.

N.B.—Both quarter-boats are cleared away ready for lowering at a moment's warning, but the "lee" one is only to be lowered at first. Running before the wind the "starboard" boat is always the lee one by the above.

N.B.—If running before the wind the "port" side is to be considered the weather side.

The advantages of the foregoing system of manœuvring will be best observed if reference be made to the objections suggested in the preceding chapters; they are, however, given in a few words.

1. The whole strength of the watch on deck is concentrated on those ropes which serve to take a portion of the most powerful body of sail off the ship, and to deaden her way with the least possible delay; these are the weather-clews of the courses and the weather-braces. On the other hand, as I have already endeavoured to prove, when both clews of the mainsail are started by the tack and sheet being let go, and the mainyard flying square at the same time, the sail catching flat aback will defy the efforts of the whole watch to

master it, whose strength is divided among the clew-garnets and braces; sternway therefore will soon follow.

2. In a man-of-war, where it is customary to have hands stationed during the night-watches at the topgallant royal, and in squally weather at the topsail halyards, besides a division of topmen being kept aloft, another portion of the body of sail is readily taken off at the very first of the alarm of a "man overboard!"

3. The helm is ordered to be put down, not to its fullest extent, but according to the steering qualities of the vessel herself, or according as she carries her helm at the time, and as is necessary for the manœuvre in progress. The quartermaster at the conn at the time of an accident, always takes the weather-wheel, and uses his best judgment in its management, to preclude the chances of the ship coming round with him, or acquiring sternway.

4. Much time may be gained at night, especially when studding-sails are set, by the look-out men being stationed to attend the ropes nearest to their post, and to see them clear; stoppers and extra turns being cast off ready for the order to lower, at other times they are attended by those nearest to them at the time of an alarm.

SAILING IN LINE OF BATTLE.

The same system of manœuvring is as applicable to the ships of a fleet or squadron, as it is to those on detached service.

The ship of a fleet or squadron losing a man overboard (as in Case I.), having let go her life-buoy, is luffed up in the wind; her upper sails being lowered or furled, the weather-clews of her courses run up, and her head-sheets *kept fast*, she soon shoots out from her leader's wake and the line of sailing, then squares her mainyard and drops her boats with the signal flying, to announce the disaster to the admiral or senior officer. The remaining ships of the line *keep away* a point *together;* and when sufficiently clear of the original line of sailing, or have altered their bearing from the ship where the accident occurred, they *heave-to together*, while the nearest ship in the line detaches her boats to the rescue of the man.

The above remarks are applicable to sailing in close order in the daylight, and in favourable circumstances of wind and weather. On such occasions as described in Case IV. and the succeeding ones,

when ships of a fleet are rarely ranged in close order of sailing, the whole line *heave-to together;* so they do in all cases of *sailing large.*

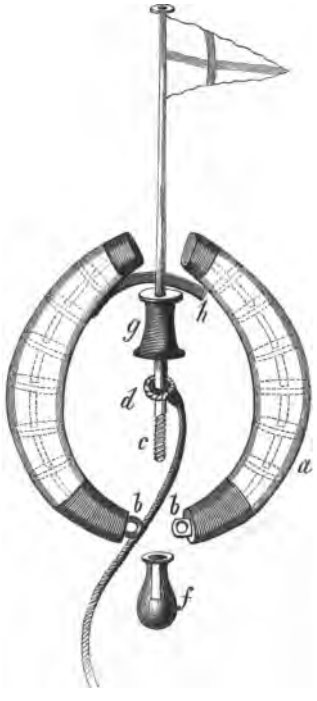
Ships of a fleet also at night, except they are in the immediate presence of an enemy, are seldom ranged in close order of sailing. In the event, therefore, of an accident occurring after dark, there is probably sufficient time for the ship which loses a man overboard to make the signal necessary for announcing her loss, and preparing the following ship for her change of position. The flash of the life-buoy is of itself a signal to the latter; the lock and fuze (it is well known) are not, however, infallible. One thing is certain—that the signal made should be instantaneous, and the apparatus for making it well tested. I have often wondered why some machine, on the principle of the flash-pan used by smugglers, is not commonly in vogue in our navy. For a night signal, which is often required on the very instant, much time is often lost in first seeking and then igniting a blue light. The latter, or other variety of false fires, might be easily adapted and ignited by a instrument on the above principle when requisite to announce any sudden danger. And to apply it to the case in point, the sentry at the life-buoy, or others of the look-out men, might be advantageously supplied with one or more of these instruments, to be fired on the occasion of an alarm of this kind, as a signal to the rest of the fleet; for instance—

Two quick and consecutive flashes might be made to signify . . .	" A man overboard!"
A false fire	" He is drowned!"
A common blue light	" He is saved!"

The ship which experiences the loss to hoist at once position lights at her peak and bowsprit, to be repeated by the remaining ships, and kept up until the former has made sail and resumed her position in the line.

PLAN I.

A LIFE-BUOY WITH A LINE ATTACHED.



a a, the *arms* of the life-buoy; the dotted lines show their internal construction, viz. a number of flat pieces of cork of an oval shape strung on cane or other light and pliant wood, and fixed to solid pieces of cork or light wood at the extremities of each arm; the whole covered with canvass smeared with pitch, or several coats of paint, to ensure their being perfectly water-tight.

b b, *bolts* or *staples*, through which the lower part of the *staff c* is inserted, forming a hinge, and serving to connect the two *arms* of the buoy.

c, the end of the staff threaded for a screw; on this is fixed the weight *f*.

d, a thimble spliced into the end of a line on a *reel inboard*. (The deep-sea leadline and reel may be made to serve the purpose, provided the ship's way be always stopped, or, at all events, materially checked, before a strain is brought upon the line. This is of course applicable to the case of the apparatus being used for rescuing a man at sea.)

f, a *weight* screwed to the flag-staff, just sufficient to keep it per-

pendicular, without materially adding to the weight of the buoy, and serving to confine all parts of the apparatus together.

g, a piece of light wood for a man to grasp, as shown in fig. 2.

h, a *flap* of stout leather, which, by the pressure of the water against it as the buoy is hauled up to the vessel, serves to close the aperture between the two arms of the buoy, and to exclude the chance of the man being left behind, if he be too exhausted to grasp the staff, as shown in the woodcut opposite.

The plan of attaching a flag-staff to the life-buoy commonly used in our navy, was proposed some years back by Lieutenant Dorville, and it would seem a pity that it has not been more generally adopted.

The idea of the "floating-line" is by no means a modern one; it appears to have been formerly used on the open sea for saving men from drowning, although for some reasons it has fallen into disuse, and is now almost entirely confined to inland lakes and rivers, and is to be seen in various forms, among the other methods for saving life, at the establishments of the Royal Humane Society.

The apparatus, therefore, proposed by the author, is only to be viewed as a combination of his own of a variety of useful principles, and adapting them to certain ends, which are given as follows:—

1. For saving a man who has fallen overboard under ordinary circumstances it may be most efficient. It will increase his chances of being saved at all times. It is of course liable to certain casualties, which are obvious to every one, but are all, more or less, to be avoided.

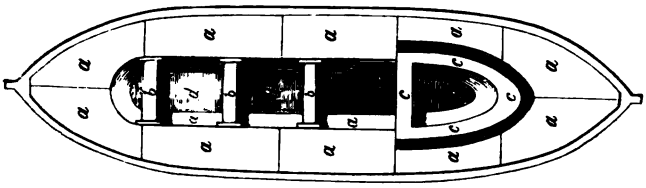
2. For sending a line from a stranded vessel to the beach for saving her crew, the same apparatus may be carried by the boat appointed to the task. The buoy may prove a ready support to the crew in the event of the boat being swamped, and enable them still to carry out their orders. This may seem to be overrating the powers of buoyancy of the former. Such is not the case. The size of a boat does not always constitute its efficiency. A *dingy*, with a *couple of hands* only, after a larger boat had been swamped, and consigned more than one to a watery grave, carried the line on shore by which the crew of the "Challenger" were eventually landed. Four men at the least, with their wits about them, may be easily supported at the same time by the arms of this life-buoy under all but very extraordinary circumstances of wind and weather.

3. For floating a line to a wreck at sea for the purpose of taking her in tow, or else saving her crew, when there is no possibility of communicating with her by means of a boat.

DIRECTIONS FOR USE.

The life-buoy at sea should be suspended by some kind of *slip* or *catch* to one of the stern or quarter davits, and the reel inboard be fixed in such a position that the line may run off with the greater ease. The look-out man to have charge of it at night,—to disconnect the slip or catch on the very first instant of an alarm; then to pay the line off the reel,—to take care that it be not checked during the process of rounding-to—and, in short, to be responsible for the efficiency of the whole apparatus. If the man in *danger of drowning* has succeeded in reaching the life-buoy, he places himself within its arms, which, as the apparatus is hauled through the water, are *closed* by their own resistance, and thus serve to support him. If his strength be too much exhausted to grasp the staff, he has nothing to do but place his arms over the buoy on either side.

Plan II. Fig. 1.



PLAN II.

A LIFE OR SURF-BOAT, FOR CARRYING A LINE TO THE SHORE FROM A WRECK, OR SAVING A "MAN OVERBOARD."

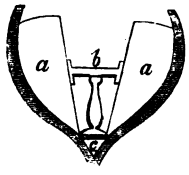
Length over all, 18 feet. Breadth, extreme, 5 feet.
Constructed of wood, and as light as is consistent with strength, to pull 4 oars.

a, a number of *air-tight cases*, made of wickerwork or light wooden framework, the *upper side* of solid plank, covered with folds of canvass, painted or pitched, fitting into the boat, and kept in their places by the *thwarts* and *uprights*, which are made to disconnect, as explained in fig. 2.

d, *the floor*, slightly convex, extending the full length of the keelson, and leaving an open space, (*c*, fig. 2,) between it and the limbers. The keel is covered with thin sheet lead, extending over a part of the garboard-streak on either side.

e, *the well*.

Plan II. Fig. 2.



SECTION OF THE LIFE-BOAT, WITH AIR-TIGHT CASES.

a b, the thwarts connected with the air-tight cases on each side by means of a hook and eye, and confined to the *uprights* (which are bolted into the keelson) by a nut and screw; all parts are thus easily disconnected for the purpose of examining or repairing.

c, cross pieces of strong wood bolted to the timbers, convex, with gratings fitted to them over the limbers. These form a *floor*, on which the air-tight cases rest, and to which the *uprights* for the thwarts may be secured, allowing a free passage for whatever water the boat may contain, into the *well* through the limbers. There are two *apertures*, one on each side of the keel, with *valves* so constructed that the pressure of water outside may close them, and effectually exclude the water, *externally*, while the boat is afloat; and, on the other hand, allow the water to run out from *inboard* while she is being hoisted up to the davits, thereby lightening her as much as possible of all supernumerary weight.

N.B. A portion of the air-tight cases (those amidships) may be fitted for containing fresh water or provisions, if necessary, each case contributing about one-third of its stowage for the purpose.

The advantages of the foregoing plan are these:—

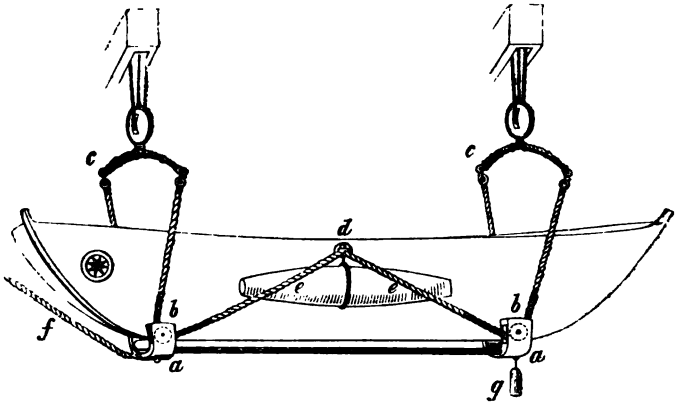
1. The timbers of the boat may part; but as long as the keel holds together, and a portion of the gunwale, her crew may still proceed on their allotted duty.

2. If the keel parts, the boat cannot sink. If the whole arrangement becomes disconnected, a portion of the air-tight compartments injured, which is improbable (since wickerwork and canvass will give considerably before they rend) the crew have ample means of artificial support left in the remainder, which are left entire, every man having his separate *life-buoy* for his support.

3. If the gunwale gives, and the oars are thereby disabled, the crew have recourse to the *paddles*, which are fixed along the inside of the boat; these prove admirable substitutes for the oar in a surf or sea-way.

The life-boat to be fitted for a rudder, but the use of the steer-oar is to be recommended for all occasions of danger.

Plan II. Fig. 3.



THE METHOD OF SLINGING AND DISCONNECTING THE "LIFE-BOAT" WHILE THE SHIP HOLDS HER WAY.

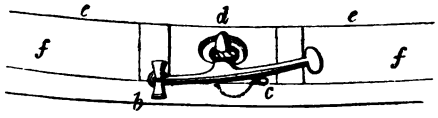
a a, two wooden *chocks* connected by an iron bar with *rollers*, on which the keel of the boat rests.

b b, *live sheaves*, on which the *slings* traverse on either side of the boat, *middled* at *d* with a thimble spliced into the bight. This thimble is called the *disconnecting thimble*. The latter passes through a *pipe* in the centre of the boat's gunwale, and over the *catch* or *slip*, (*d*, fig. 4,) after passing through the sheave-holes at *b*, fig. 3. The ends of the slings, which have also a thimble spliced into them, are *shackled* to the *long straps* (*c c*), which are secured to the wooden stretchers, as shown in the figure; these are lashed to the lower blocks of the *tackle-falls*. Those parts of the slings which are subject to the wear and tear of passing over the *sheaves* are *served*.

e e are buoys of cork or light wood, covered with canvass, *padded* and capable of supporting the weight of the slings after the boat is disengaged, as shown in fig. 5; they act, moreover, as *fenders* between the slings and the boat when the latter is slung, as shown in fig. 3.

f, a short pendant spliced into the *foremost chock*, with a thimble in the end. To this the boat-rope from forward is made fast.

Plan II. Fig. 4.



THE DISCONNECTING CATCH OR SLIP.

b, the pivot or fulcrum of the iron lever, with the *tooth d*; over this the *disconnecting thimble* is passed when the boat is slung, as shown in the figure.

c, a *pin* or *forelock*, with chain attached. This is to *confine* the lever in its place after the boat is slung. The pin should be *screwed* in.

e e, the boat's *gunwale*.

Plan II. Fig. 5.

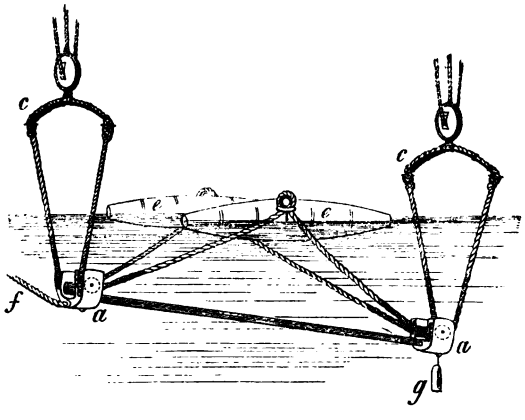


Fig. 5 shows the slings floating on the water after the boat has been disengaged, or preparatory to hoisting her up.

g, a small weight attached to the *aftermost chock* to facilitate the process of disengaging after the weight of the boat is on the water. The other parts of the diagram are the same as in fig. 3.

DIRECTIONS FOR USE.

To lower and disengage the Life-boat at sea while the Ship still holds her way.—The two men on the thwarts nearest to the disengaging slips unscrew the pins (*c*, fig. 4), and keep the *levers* in their hands while the boat is lowering. When she is lowered sufficiently near the surface to be disengaged without risk, at a signal or order from the officer or coxswain, the levers are pressed down together; the *thimbles* being thereby disengaged, the *chocks* drop from under the boat's *keel* below the surface, and a *strain* being kept on the boat-rope during the process of lowering, and the vessel having head-way, they pass under her bottom. By this means, therefore, a boat may be safely disengaged under all ordinary circumstances, and even in a sea-way, shortly after the first alarm of a man overboard, or after the way of the vessel is first checked.

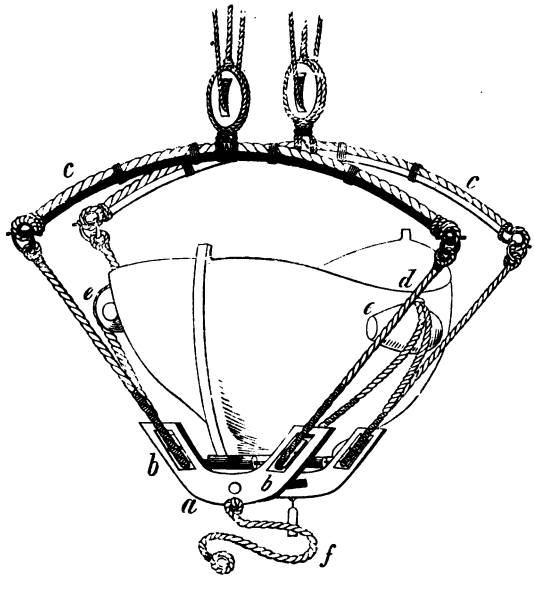
To sling and hoist up to the Davits.—The boat, on her return, is steered under the stretchers, and between the two buoys, (*e e*, fig. 5,) the *disengaging thimbles* picked up and placed through the pipes and over the *catches* or *slips* by the same men, whose duty it was to disengage them; when secure, the boat is hoisted up.

THE SAME SLINGS ADAPTED TO THE ORDINARY QUARTERBOATS OF A VESSEL AT SEA.

For *sea purposes* the same method may be advantageously applied to vessels in general which are unprovided with a boat of the kind detailed in the preceding plans. No further description is necessary for explaining this woodcut; the slings are the same on a larger scale, and the plan for disconnecting precisely similar. (*Plan* II. *Fig.* 6.)

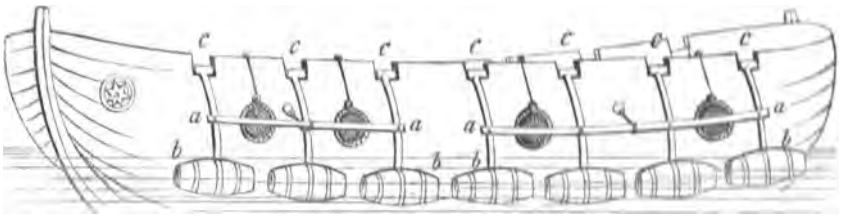
Those naval officers who are advocates for as much of iron about that part of a ship's furniture which is much exposed during use to the deteriorating effects of salt water, may prefer chain to rope in the construction of boat's slings, such as described above. The author's opinions have been already given in a chapter of this Treatise. It is true that rope will rot from constant exposure to water, but the objection is hardly applicable to the case in point, since these slings

Plan II. Fig. 6.



should be kept apart for *sea purposes* only, or *strong tide-way anchorages*. It is seldom required to lower a boat at sea; and the occasions might be still further diminished if any weight be given to many of the remarks in the foregoing treatise. Moreover, a boat's gear, especially so important a part as her *slings*, should be constantly examined, and renewed on the detection of the slightest *flaw* or defect. The *slings* should be of well-stretched rope, of a size larger than actually necessary for the boat's support. They should be cut of sufficient length to allow the arch of the stretchers to pass just clear of the men's heads, so that the boats may be hoisted nearly as close to the davits as they are by the ordinary method of suspension. The *gripes* should be always passed after the boat is up, and the slips or catches occasionally examined.

Plan III. Fig. 1.

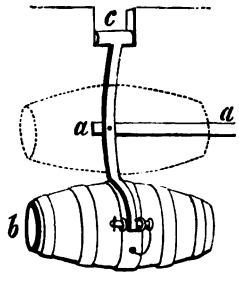


PLAN III.

A SIMPLE METHOD FOR THE TEMPORARY CONVERSION OF THE BOATS OF A MAN-OF-WAR OR MERCHANT-SHIP INTO LIFE-BOATS, FOR CASES OF EMERGENCY, BY MEANS OF THE "BREAKERS" COMMONLY SUPPLIED FOR THEIR USE.

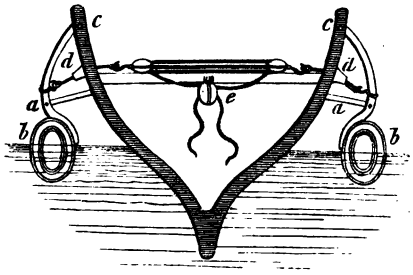
a a, *a a*, a number of wooden *outriggers*, constructed separately, according to the form or *mould* of the boat for which they are intended; each revolving upon a *centre* in the lower part of the rowlock, so that it may be turned over and lay *inboard* (leaving room for the oar to work), without occupying much space in the boat; or *outboard*, when required to increase her stability, or reduce her draught of water. The whole are connected by wooden *cross-pieces* extending from *a* to *a*, by means of *nuts* and *screws*. The boat's "breakers," *b b*, *b b*, are such as are commonly used in the navy, attached to the end of each outrigger, as shown in fig. 2.

Plan III. Fig. 2.



Shows one of the *outriggers* with *breaker* attached, as it lays *inboard* between the thwarts when not required for use *externally*. The dotted line is intended to show the possibility of attaching a second *breaker* to any number of the outriggers, for increasing the powers of flotation of that part of the boat when subjected to any accumulated weight, such as for *carrying out an anchor*, &c.

Plan III. Fig. 3.



Shows the method of *forcing* the outriggers under the bilge of the boat when applied *externally*, by means of two small tackles inboard, leading along their respective thwarts, and hooked to the thimble of a *short pendant* at *d*. The latter passes out through a *pipe*, with a *leather fairleader* nailed outside (such as is used for the chain

lanyards of the lower deck ports of a line-of-battle ship) to exclude the water when the boat is deeply laden.

e, a small double block strapped into an eye-bolt on the foremost edge of the thwart. This acts as a leading block for the tackle falls, which are passed along the thwarts into the men's hands when required for use.

Both the blocks of the tackle are also *double*. The falls are rove thus:—The end first passes through a sheave in the *leading block*, is rove through all those in both *purchase blocks*, and the end is brought back again through the second sheave in the *leading block*, as shown in the figure.

The advantages of the above simple arrangement are manifold. The last injunction given by a commanding officer to every midshipman going away in a boat on duty, is usually not to forget his "breakers." Nevertheless, the latter are more commonly applied to a boat as *ballast* when filled with water, than as the means of increasing her powers of buoyancy, through their application as *air-tight vessels*.

It seems hardly necessary to enumerate the many cases when the empty breakers of a boat may be brought into play with advantageous results; I will, however, specify a few which bear most upon the treatise.

1. The *quarter-boats* of a vessel while at sea may be thus fitted with obvious advantage, for saving a man overboard. In this case the *outriggers* are kept rigged while the boat is at the davits, but not *thrown out* until she has been lowered and is clear of the slings, otherwise the latter might catch a portion of the framework.

2. For crossing a surf, for beaching, or for launching a boat through surf, the same apparatus may be used.

3. For diminishing the draught of water of a boat. We hear of boats taking the ground while covering the landing of troops, and being thereby exposed to an enemy's fire at disadvantage. We read of boats sinking to the bottom, and their crews drowned or thrown upon their own resources as swimmers. Boats employed on surveying, or other detached service, in rivers, are often addled among the

shallows common to inland navigation. Those employed watering or provisioning might occasionally owe their safety to an apparatus of the kind.

4. For carrying out a heavy anchor in a smaller boat than is equal to the task without the aid of artificial support; the safety of a ship, and the lives of the crew, may be thereby insured.

Last, and not least. When the crew of a sinking vessel are thrown upon their own resources upon the wide ocean, how many more might be saved in the boats were they each separately fitted with the apparatus described in Plan III.

DIRECTIONS FOR USE.

The "breakers," when required for other purposes, are easily detached from the outriggers, or stowed in their usual place, under the thwarts. The wooden framework, since it is made to fit according to the boat's model, occupies little or no space. When the boat is under sail, and carrying no extra burden, the breakers attached to the framework, and ready for use, cannot be said to occupy room which cannot well be spared, and they may possibly prove trusty friends in time of need. When carrying a cargo, the framework may be thrown out and *housed-to* against the fenders by the tackles inboard. When required in the capacity of *outriggers*, for increasing the stability of a boat, the tackles need only be set up *hand-taut*, and the breakers and framework then act apart from the boat, like the outriggers of the canoes of the South Sea Islanders.

The "breakers" of course must be of the best construction, rendered perfectly water-tight, the bung-holes as small as possible, and the bungs accurately fitted. Every individual of the crew should be held separately responsible for the efficiency of the breaker and that part of the apparatus fitted to the rowlock in which he pulls his oar.

THE END.

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THE LIFE BUOY.